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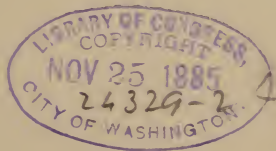
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ARE THESE THINGS SO?

BY ✓
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PREFACE.

Are these things so? Let the reader answer. Whatever be the mystery of God's truth, the system of Christianity was taught by its Founder with simile, parable, and homely pictures from every-day life. Thus every auditor was invited to test the teachings by the severest, because absolutely familiar, standards. Christianity still invites the plain man's verification, after that ancient fashion; for the universe is forever a unity. Earth, air, sea, sky, and human life are garnished with illustrations to-day as then; they crowd upon the eye, till the difficulty with some is which to choose.

These excerpts were mostly taken from

the current sermons of last year. It was primarily an effort to gratify cherished friends not resident in this city, and such imprisoned invalids as every parish has, whom I could not favor with a "loan," never having had such a thing as a "written sermon." It was my habit therefore to seize the moments earliest succeeding the preaching, while memory was vivid, and commit to paper salient passages from the discourses. From such material, soon pursued at greater length as a pleasure to myself, this collection has been made. I am also indebted to the ready pencil of a hearer, who has given me back my own again for the present purpose.

EMORY J. HAYNES.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., 1879.

ARE THESE THINGS SO?



“Let us argue it.” No, I decline. Did you ever walk out of a starry night when some one suddenly calls attention to the milky way? Now you look straight at it, pierce it, and seem to see it fade almost into the general blue; there is almost no milky way. But take a half view, directing the eyes about forty-five degrees, and so, the hazy winrow, gray, seems dense and palpable as Saturn’s rings.

I will not debate your orthodoxy, nor argue to prove that you have backslidden: for you could refine and refine away, by subtleties of sophistry which even deceive yourself while speaking. Take you a half view between your skeptic’s club of to-day and your prayer-meeting of twenty years ago; your Sabbaths now and Sabbaths then; your volumes of free thought now and your old Bible then; your self-care

now and God-care then. Look half-way between then, when at a father's death-bed you hoped for such a strong assurance as enveloped him, and now, when your departure, twenty years the nearer, has so little hope for immortality. We may argue too much. The human heart bears its own witness if left free. In moments when you lay your logic down, there shines above your head a bright and holy way, which prophets went,—and your feet are not tending towards it now.

Our forty years past are like the *Campania* of Italy, south of Rome, dotted all over with the grim, pathetic ruins of things attempted but not finished; finished but suffered to fall into decay, in the Christian life. Here stalks the broken aqueduct which once we built from the Fountain Head of truth to our thirsty souls. Its straggling arches, through which the showered plenty of heaven would run out as through a sieve, reproach us. Its temples, once dedicated to noble worship, have been quarried away for palaces of mammon. Its buttresses of de-

fence and high resolve are now but the playgrounds of strolling memories. Its beauty is but the beauty of ruin. Sometimes, in sentimental mood, we go back to sit under the white light of the lazy sun, gazing down blue aisles of tottering walls whose very dust is motionless, whose scattered palms beyond hold their breath in the idle shimmer of this dead noon. "This wall was intended to run thus: this pillar to stand thus: here portico, *atrium* and *penetralia*, but"—and we sneer at ourselves, or laugh broadly, acknowledging our failure. Is it then hopeless? With man it is impossible, but with God all things are possible, even the restoration of our ideals.

Alone! To wake out of dreams and, gazing round an empty room, wish one still were dreaming. To mark the companioned upon the public street and envy them. To feel propelled forth, as if by walking, walking, walking, as the homeless wind flies, one could get back his lost again. To gaze at a face—no, a profile, for a full face destroys the illusion—as the stage

jolts many a block past your destination, till you must break the spell with "No. Never again in this world. Alone!" To return at twilight, that hour of agony, and go on opening doors, as if the right door would yet be opened: to call out a name amid the echoing shadows of the dreary house, calling just as you once spake it—and shudder at your own rashness, and grow self-possessed again only with "*I am alone!*"

It is then one reads aright the words of Jesus, "Yet I am not alone, for the Father, He is with me."

A mechanic having become a Christian resolves that the whole superstructure of his life, from this moment of a Christly foundation, shall conform to the corner-stone. His vocation is surely not pretentious. He heads bolts; bolts in ships, bolts in bridges, bolts in railways; and heads them well. Passed now long since into the heavens, can memory be destroyed, or self-consciousness disrupted? Do you tell me that Herod shall meet his life record, and not John

Armstrong the blacksmith? Shall Paine or Paul lament or rejoice over their earthly careers, as they watch the growth and perpetuity of causes they set in motion, and not the book-keeper or the nursery-maid!

I had rather study a rose than a botany, a person than a theory about persons; doubtless the systematic knowledge is necessary, but the experimental is absolutely indispensable. The best text-book on mental metaphysics is my own and my neighbor's mind, for man is a living epistle known and read of all men who will open their eyes. There is to me a nameless charm in following Jesus Christ through a whole day's walk, work, and words, as we probably can do several times by the New Testament narrative, amid Galilean hills, on Perean mountains, or in the streets of Jerusalem.

A loving and wise mother could teach the blundering controversialists and harsh debaters of our times a finer skill than they have

dreamed of. Her boy is headstrong and ill-bent; but grown till he can no longer be caught by the arm and bid to his room, a prisoner; his stout feet can run away, so far away that death may claim him in the hospital of Singapore; he is not to be commanded "do this, asking no questions," for Eighteen Years asks many, and has theories of its own too,—the oddest sort of theories, maybe, which the wisdom of six thousand years has proved fallacious, but he has not. Now the woman who bore him argues not for the mere sake of getting the better of the argument; not she, for her object is to save her boy. She assembles no audience to show off her wit and sparkle at the poor lad's expense; nor lays traps to anger her opponent that he may make himself ridiculous, as wily swordsmen at polemics do, crying, "A hit! a hit! Was not that a home-thrust? And now I'll gibbet him." But, kind heaven! how does this lioness draw in her claws and tuft with softness the paw that cuffs the cub back into the lair again! She seeks not to push him too far, and is frightened at her own boldness when she has out-debated him, lest she should have too deeply stabbed his

pride, and so clings about his wounded heart with tears. She "corners him," to be sure, but with two such loving arms and kind, that, to remember that defeat at three-score years, is still to bless the gentle conqueror. She charges home and presses her advantage now, but, all the while, dear heart of skill, she would have him feel, not humiliated nor herself exalted, but asserts that he did it, the boy, *he* determined to do right, to him be praise.

This is true controversy—not to save your system, your party, your reputation, your argument, but to *save your man*. In doing that you have saved your system and all the rest.

When I was a boy there was no such sport as the rifle on Saturdays when school let us free. To follow a fox all the morning up hill and down dale, the cunning brute outwitting you—it was exultant to win the game of life and death at last. But instantly he's dead—regret. The graceful shape prone at your feet, and the brave little heart beating out its life-blood upon the heather snows—dead. What

shall one do with a dead fox? If I could have shot my fox dead and *yet not killed him!* How many a controversialist has felt, after the battle, I have brought down my man,—but I have a ruined man upon my hands. I have conquered, but lost a friend; destroyed the good name of my brother. Ah! save your man, that's triumph; so that, when all's over, he greets you, convinced, living, working, hoping, and your skirts are clear of blood.

I paint one of the bright ideal deeds of the Christian faith. Under dripping skies towards midnight, ringing at the hospital gate, praying for such strength and wisdom as may gird one well to meet the trying hours now coming within those frowning stones, pierced by twinkling chamber lights; softly, at the foot of the great entry stairs which lead up into regions of groan and agony; answering the white cap,

“That friendless sailor whom I visited of late—sent for me.”

“Yes, dying; come.”

Along echoing corridors, into the great, bare

room, past rows on rows of haggard sleepers, and who sleep not for pain, but turn upon the visitor with looks of invitation or despair; still scanning names adown the blank, white walls dimly shown in shadow; bending down at length,

"I have come. You had to send for me this time."

"Yes," gasped out upon a fetid breath. The reaching of an unnerved, wandering arm, till its hand falls clammy cold upon the warm palm of a living man. "Stay with me till I'm gone."

Then to keep that vigil till the great eyes close and the weary breast is moveless, praying heaven for this stranger as if he were a brother of the blood, catching up the last word for who-soever—who?—shall afterwards inquire, and stepping forth in the sunburst of the morning.—This to us is the meaning of Christianity. Nothing in all this world, man of the modern unbelief, not stalwart books of orthodox defending, not mighty sermons true, not gorgeous spectacles of cathedral worship, nothing, by our own creed, is more truly Christ-like and betok-

ening a Christian than such deeds as these. Who spoke it ever as our Founder spoke the lesson of sweet charity in the story of the Good Samaritan?

A nest of birdlings just out of egg, in the old door-yard tree, by its very defenceless innocence tempts the cruelty that lurks in boyish human nature, to climb, to harry, and to gloat with sense of power over its affrighting. But Innocence has a terrible revenge, when the mother bird with plaint, not fighting, removes her nest. We were too wicked to be dwelt with, our mother said.

In the numberless debates over truth or fact, who can forget the gentle self-respect with which some fond old saint bent the last look of astonishment and speechless pain upon our impudence—and left us. Left us to lash ourselves with memories of kindnesses forgotten in our heat, and of ten thousand kinder words in olden times, repaid in such base coin. Left us knowing we had made a great heart bleed, and had naught to show for it, but our own red hands.

Left us desiring to be angry with him, but with no peg to hang our anger on; and hence hating ourselves, despising ourselves; knowing that he ought to despise us, only, too good, he will pity us—and pity angers us the more.

So Christ avenged Himself upon the inhospitable Samaritans, when He left them “and went to another village.”

There are seasons, when, on account of atmospheric conditions, the housekeeper is perpetually busy wiping off mould: mould on picture-frames, on books, on the polished surfaces of upholstery. Mould is everywhere, on the trunks of garden trees and statuary; and, sprung up in a night, unsightly fungus amid the beds of flowers, or peeping from the interstices of splendid wall-stones. It reminds one of those mental atmospheres which at times seem to us to be settling Decay over all human effort, and fond hopes. Lately we have been oppressed with the thought, “How useless is it to plan! I am sixty years old; the remnant of life is nothing.” Or, if only thirty, life seems strangely

uncertain and brief, as it never has before. Which way we look we see mould.

It may be a friend's sudden and premature death has occasioned the sensation. It may be the Spirit of God.

Some strong wills cast off this gloom through sheer natural vigor; some endure till the cloud passes, as sour north-east weather is endured. But some there are who trample on this sadness with the faith which claims continued existence and unbroken living, through the Christ who was dead but is alive again, and living for evermore.

There is a changeless tendency of events to set themselves right, as time passes, in spite of us, if we have attempted to set them wrong. We may have seized a present moment and sought to detain it, as a man might seek to hold a brooklet just issuing from its highland spring. Knowing it must go rushing down into the valley of the future, we yet essay to dam it up by false representations, by twigs of sinful agreements. "You do thus, and you

thus. And never, never, tell any mortal man the secret. To be sure water ought to run down hill: but we can change the course of nature. To be sure our convenience is wicked, but it must be suited for this once." We cast into the dam silver and gold and mud and labors, nay, our very souls, after all to find that inanimate nature is morally pure. While we look, the sweet rains of heaven, and ever gentlest dews work against us. The majestic truth will have its own way. Our house is whelmed in the flood.

By the time a youth has reached the years of active life, he has met one honest friend,—inanimate nature. Fire will burn the bare hand, every time. Air, water, light, and brown earth, speak the truth to him, whatever men may say, or attempt to make these elements, for a passing moment, say. The reason is that inanimate things obey God exactly. They are the expression of His thoughts. And future events are largely dependent upon the functions of the material world.

Stepping forth these spring mornings, I am everywhere saluted with heavenly perfumes. Will any man tell me what perfume is? The scholar has tried: but he knows not. I know not; but whence it comes I know. It is from these clouds of apple-blossoms and fruit-bearers all, which seem—these clouds—as if fallen from the skies, and strangely earth-anchored. They stretch their downy shapes like arms of softest dalliance, on which one longs to cast himself for grand repose. But the fragrance is most wonderful. It must be welcome to Deity, like the sweet-smelling savor of ancient sacrifice. When I smell it I know my God is trying to say something to me. It is a “Good-morning, my child.” It is His kiss. His gesture of love poured out upon His children from the lips of inanimate things. It is His breath upon my cheek, so near does He come to me. It is not grossly obtrusive—like what one gets from conservatories, bouquets, and garments, which from very abundance offends; but this of the fields is delicate and coy. It comes—and while you look for its source it is gone upon the zephyrs. It comes again, and plays around you, like the

attentions of a refined and noble friendship, which is never impudently curious and familiar, but offers just enough interference with your life to increase its happiness. It is a type of "special Providence," which enters into our life-work just enough to cheer and keep us from falling; but never officiously doing all, so that we be encouraged in shiftless dependence and idleness.

Observe how free, large and unconfined is the beauty of June. Are not these attributes of Deity? My neighbor has kept, all winter long, his conservatory window crowded full of flowers that look upon the public street. It must cost him something. Why does he not shut them up to his own use? He could not. Every flower would cry, "Are you not ashamed, when we are so beautiful that we ought to be seen by all!" A man can be selfish with beefsteak, but if he have but a handful of flowers they must be seen and admired. As well think to shut up God.

This voice is now everywhere, telling of

Deity, the Unselfish, the Non-respecter of persons. The hillsides beyond the stockade speak to the prisoner. The lilacs are come out by the well-sweep of the northern farmhouse. The stump-lot burnt-piece of the frontiersman is flushing all over with the clover. The tablecloth patch of the switchman's wife is smiling with beauty to the rocky patch of the flagman's wife at the south end of the tunnel—who would have thought the great God would descend to plant there? The laborer, returning from noisome refineries whose coarse odors have stifled his senses all day, is saluted, as he walks past the rich man's grounds, with "Good-evening, good man. God give you sleep to-night. I am the breath of the May flowers come over the wall to say that my Maker is thy Maker. Thy God and my God wishes you well. If God so clothe the grass of the field—" and he plods on his way repeating the glad refrain, "If God so clothe the grass of the field."

Who could mistake this voice which is abroad these days, even had not Christ interpreted for us the speech of the lilies? Something is in the winds and the still air, in the long flashing

hours of sunlight lingering where the night has been, in the verdure so vigorous that wildernesses bloom as well as pampered lawns, telling the lonely of a companionship wide as the wide world; telling the sick they shall be well in this warmth; telling the disheartened of hope as broken boughs sprout anew; telling the unclean of a purity as fresh as the flower that springs from a dunghill; telling the bereaved of a resurrection, for the frozen December sods above the grave are knitting their cut edges and pulsing with life.

Paul evangelized the then civilized world by striking the great cities. He recognized their power. As Paris is France, so was Antioch Phœnicia. Derbe and Lystra in Lycaonia were what Cleveland is in Northern Ohio or Chicago to the Northwest. Paul took all Greece by the two forks of the beard at Athens and Corinth. Neither time nor strength allowed him to approach the *pagani*, the rural districts: but they were left to the missionary zeal of the great metropolitan churches. Great cities have char-

acters as distinct as men. The spirit of Sparta, of Carthage is warlike instead of esthetic like Athens: Babylon and modern Paris sensuous instead of commercial like London. It would not be difficult to characterize New York. As the color of a lamp shade determines the tints of a room, so the moral, intellectual, and religious complexion of America is largely determined by the dominant spirit of its great cities. The grandest churches, the most munificent charities, the loftiest conception of commercial honor should be found in the metropolis. As the worst of bad people are found there, so ought the best of the good. The frontier preacher can not bear to think that the believers of the great city are any thing else but thrifty, harmonious, doing great things for the denomination: it is enough that he is straitened.

The city must be generous. Thousands, over the land, are praying for the pious young business man, standing in his focus of opportunity. Over against the corruption with which the bad city disturbs legislation in the interest of sin, I put the benevolence of the good city, dotting the hillsides and valleys with churches and

schools. Young Christian men should appreciate what it is to live in Jerusalem, set upon a hill not to be hid.

The drawing-master throws down before his pupil the Head of Christ.

"But the term ends in two weeks," the maid objects.

"True. What of that?"

"Can I finish this head in that time?"

"No. You will only begin. But are you not intending to graduate? You will begin, next term, where you leave off now."

The great God knows she will never return, for she has not three weeks to live. Yet does He interrupt her? Rather, looking on, He is pleased, if she be His child; for The Beautiful is one of the employments of eternity.

We assent to this, when we think of the pious artist's death, the believing scientist's, the theologian's; but we find it hard to project a life, schooled in banks and factories, into that eternal employ. May we not however be sure that the character developed in every earth-school

will remain? The workbench and pulpit we shall not take with us, but the love, faith, hope, fidelity, and devotion which the workbench and pulpit wrought in character will remain, the tools to be set to work on nobler tasks forever. The final cause of this short life seems to be, not the completion of tasks, but proficiency, that we may learn the use of ourselves for an endless life. We are like the apprentice who is bid go slowly yet surely, not concerning himself about finishing the flower he cuts on some gable stone. Only let him do well what he does. Often the beloved task is snatched away at the very moment of our greatest proficiency, or the artisan himself is bid go up higher, his plan half done. The missionary must return, at the very moment of greatest success. The child is taken from us, just as we were beginning to understand our work upon the delicate spirit. But we shall, some far-off day, unpack the utensils fitted to our hands that hour of disappointment, and perhaps disused thereafter till death, in the presence of noble labors rising by the Jasper Sea.

A strong man is sleeping prone upon his bed, when the children are sent in to awaken him. One whispers in his ears, at which the prostrate frame turns uneasily, but no more. Another assails him with a feather plucked from beneath his head; and more turnings, though he sleeps. Now they weight him, with downy things piled high. Tossing, turning, staring, rubbing the eyes, the giant shall yet wake to knowledge and strength again. It is this old world. Let the young believe it, it can not rest under sin. It is restless till it has cast forth to exposure every evil deed trampling it, and vindicated all virtuous things. The earth groaneth, the constitution of things is in pain, till Christ reigns.

I have imagined an artist with whom the world has gone hard—indeed I know him through my friend—alone, old and starving. Shorter and shorter he breaks his last crust. Crumb by crumb he eats it. It is gone. Standing by a street corner in December, the third day without food—"I must have bread or die." Out from a rubbish pile of the studio a canvas.

A New Hampshire boy, he paints a Thanksgiving dinner. Flash on flash go colors. The old room, fireplace, crane; the steaming pot, the logs ablaze—and he so cold! The well-spread board; and now the chairs, and in each chair a guest, brother, sister, mother, the old sire; all filled but his one seat. How he bends him over that limned bounty, till skilful color and rare touch make seamed cakes to crack wide open, and deceive the hand that paints almost into grasping!

Then settling back the poor wretch gazed upon his picture, till he fell asleep exhausted. Subsequent days finished the sketch and hung it on a good friend's wall, where you may see it now. It did bring bread. If it were mine, I would write beneath the text it so startlingly illustrates, "My father has bread and to spare, while I perish with hunger." For so do weary, hungry men paint heaven to themselves, by faith.

Riding with my friend, a young physician, my attention was called to a sombre-looking

pile, under the leafage of the city's outskirts, a hospital for contagious diseases. He said, "It is a grand place! I have spent many happy hours there." He was a genuine healer, born and not made, and that place of hideous disease was the opportunity for the wrestlings of skill and victory.

A true Christian ought thus to feel regarding want, sorrow, ignorance, and sin. An opportunity towards which his heart leaps with delight—that he may cure.

I have lain upon a river bank above a cataract and fall, where waters were as yet unruffled, moving swiftly, softly under willows, plaited in graceful curves about great roots, now foaming into lace around my immersed hand. Looking away down where the torrent becomes tumultuous, plunging, quivering, loudly shouting, and beyond where the lip of the fall meets the sky of mists, I dip up a handful of the flood. "Oh, drops of water, you realize nothing of what is before you. I wonder whether this drop, or this, will lie at the bot-

tom of the unsunned caverns curdling cold and imprisoned long: and which will rise beaten into spray that the sun may make perpetual rainbows. I release you. Go back and go on "to find your fate," and they are shaken from the finger-tips.

So goeth the race of man into Futurity—Eternity. Who realizes what it was to have been born into this world? Who foresees the spectacles yet to be revealed along the existence line of the human soul, what excitements overpowering, what shock of splendors or of dreads? Who dare go on alone? Yet we must go on and ever. How careless are the multitude who, filled with the diversions of the present, risk, thoughtless, the grand eternities!

This very moment, of Sabbath eve, when he should be in church, a merchant is seated in his parlor, studying a miniature balance sheet from his pocket, with a view to Monday morning. "Stock and cash on hand so much. Bills receivable and payable so much." But that is not all: he has certain intangible wealth. Credit,

and good will, respect of his fellow-men and friendships for a dark day, how much? It is impossible to compute. While he is figuring here, a hundred miles away an aged matron, too feeble for church, sits by starlit windows of the rural cottage, her soft eyes still beautiful with the holy fire of mother's love, thinking of her children, and praying for this man, her bearded boy. That is wealth also. How much? Sumless. His pencil can not compute the wealth of a mother's prayers.

The bullrush, the "Bayonet-rush," for instance, on the lowlands of eastern Massachusetts, is a jointed stalk. Why do these joints form, every inch and a quarter? Is it accident? Rather, every circumstance of nature conspires to say, "Now you have had so much moisture from soil, and basilar salts, so much June sunshine and rain, so many hours. It is time to form a joint." It is formed; and then on again the upward growth. Looking back upon life, it appears to man made up of joints—a series of even and uneventful years, and

then a crisis. Another unmarked period, and again a joint. Reviewing the past one can now detect the silent conspiracy of calm, unvexed forces in the commonplace periods, maturing under the hand of nature's God. I prefer to think God rules me by law, rather than leaves me to accident.

Among the fog-clouds of this evening, high over the city roofs wag the iron fingers of City Hall clock. They divide the day into general periods convenient enough for all. It is nine o'clock to me, listlessly peering through the gray curtain, and time to go home; twelve hours more and it is time for banks to open and schools to assemble. But within this dwelling here they look at the mantel clock saying, "It is nine o'clock and he draws his first breath." The other side of the street, they look at their mantel clock and say, "Nine o'clock and he breathes his last." To one a careless hour, to another an hour of joy, to another of woe. We can not afford to go by the public time-piece. It is the mantel clock, of each

man's times and seasons, which must govern him. It is time for me to laugh; but for you to weep. Do not go you by my times. God gives you your own. See that you recognize them. It is time for the nervous youth to stop drinking. Never mind what the time-piece of his gay set is saying, or what others can endure; he must stop, within a month, or die. The overworked merchant had best consult his own times. He has reached the limit of his endurance: never mind what other men can endure. It is time for *you* to economize; let your associates live in what style they will. It is time for you to repent, though the churches may be as cold and unrevived as November pastures. How foolish is he who goes by the public time!

Two laborers start in at the edge of the growing corn as the sun starts upon the day's journey. Side by side they swing their hoes till noon, till night. Each has earned the same wage. Side by side they stand at the gate, under the evening amber night, as the farmer opens his purse. One declines his pay.

"Why? You have merited it?"

"Yes; and I have no particular reason, save a freak of passing fancy. Still I will not receive it."

That is a mind diseased. Far from admiring him, you pity the poor fellow on whom the sun's rays may have fallen too hotly.

But now he speaks again.

"Give my dues to my fellow-workman, for he has a wife and three, and is half sick, while I am single and a giant in health."

Instantly, the scene is changed, from the ruin to the highest exercise of mind; from being an act incapable of rational explanation, to one only capable of the most exalted explanation. And when the good heart adds, "I am satisfied," all good hearts and wise heads respond, "To be sure. He *has* his reward." Hence as love is the highest form of intelligence, so is it the highest form of justice. He who has surrendered his lawful dues for the sake of an intelligent love, has not defrauded self. The educated girl whose heart prompts her to become a missionary has not acted contrary to reason, but above reason. The new dwelling deferred because of a heavy

subscription to hospital or church is not robbery of self. The Christ, once rich, yet for our sakes poor, sets a new rule of just treatment of self.

Care can not be "rolled off" on to the ground, or "given to the winds," or "cast" into the sea, or drowned in a cup. There is only one disposal, aside from bearing it one's self, which a sane mind can make of a care. It may be given to a living person, your friend or God. For a care is something that needs sentient attention of mind, either your own or another's. The will may adjourn, or despair may abandon; but these are different escapes from that a mother makes when, sitting by the child's bedside in its sickness, counting the days it takes a steamer to come from Liverpool, hearing at length a strong step upon the stair, she casts all her care on her husband, and sleeps just in time to save life. Waking with a start, she satisfies her mind with the thought, "His father is there. He takes the care." Oh! that men could learn the possibility of this surrender of care to the all-capable Caretaker, while they rest.

A few days ago, on that busiest corner of the city, where at three o'clock of afternoons the pavement swarms with walking wealth, and fashion storms her own bazars, a woman was arrested, as we read, for theft. It comes out that she is a professional thief; that people were living lazy lives upon her thievings, herself consenting. She was a broom to sweep up crumbs for them. And she had beauty, and gray hairs, and all crimes, and children. Not every day, oh, no, for sin is hardening, but on some rare better day betimes it came to her to pause and muse upon the passers by her. "Yonder woman, look! A sister woman. She has fallen into kindly hands. She is some good man's fond wife and good. Her carriage-door clicks proudly. She needs not but be good. How they all care for her. She is innocent. That is righteousness. I! Oh! God—that I was like her."

Could my voice reach her? "Arise and return to the Father's house. There is bread without sin. And One who cares for you."

No age has excelled our own in adoring the idols of the senses. The wines of the club, how glowingly are their merits discussed by the occidental voluptuary. The skill of a cook, more priceless than the rarest volume or the noblest charity of the town.

Then at evening follow the modern "worshipper of the creature more than the Creator." The brilliant amphitheatre sparkling with prismatic flame; the elegant crush and hurry of patrician company mustering to the sound of orchestra; the music itself light, sensuous, passionate, Offenbach and not Mendelssohn; dress, maddening in its splendor. A thousand fans now beat the balmy air. Perfume intoxicates. The heat quickens the blood of youth, and—there! Oh! at last again before the flashing footlights, a radiant form, the idol of the town, whose picture is everywhere. In southern Europe they call it *Diva*, the divine one. Susceptible women weep behind their fans, while others burn with envy. Impressible young men hold their breath, lean forward and sate their eyes in one long thirsty gaze. The sorrows of a life-time drown in that gaze. When did these

ever direct such look of infinite veneration upon the Son of God? And now at point of ecstasy, the whole vast throng rise up in wild, crazed shout that makes the lamps tremble in the dome. Tell me, what is this but worship? What more will they bestow on the Creator? It is the dream of many a night. It claims costliest offerings laid at the feet of the idol like dust, from many an "unknown, but who adores."

The worship of the creature means death. The young girl will not be instructed, infatuated with a face and form without a soul, till the demon, mockingly stroking the curling whis-ker, deserts her among strangers to die. The wife, inexplicable mystery, forsakes the cradle by the hearth, to fly, a fanatic in this unhal- lowed worship. The husband, faithless, follows a fair shape possessed of seven devils to torment him, over land and sea, spurning every sacred tie, worshipping the physical. It is best that one worship not even an angel, as John was about to do when warned that "he do it not, but worship God."

The managers of Sunday excursions and other mausements seek to shelter themselves under the example of Christ, who said it was lawful to save a life, to heal, to do well upon the Sabbath day. True the moral quality of an action resides in the intent. Picture the Board of Directors of a corporation contemplating the infringement of the letter of the Sabbath, assembled for deliberation. They constitute a benevolent institution, do they, and not a commercial? Much is said of the distressed condition of the tenement-house poor, of fainting infancy, and nursing mothers? It is seriously proposed to transport these weary ones gratuitously; and, to complete the charity of saving life and doing good, to feed the hungry on the shore, but most reluctantly some things must be left for another year when funds are greater. These benefactors enlarge upon the mental culture of an hour by the "gray and melancholy waste" of ocean? They stir each other up with holy intent of moral elevation and true religious education by landscape, rock, and shore, ministered to such neglected masses as the churches can not reach? This and only this is the motive, to save life, to

do well—at fifty cents for the round trip—and they separate with a hymn and benediction.

One is forced to respect the honesty of the man who frankly avows “My purpose is gain; just that and nothing more.” But one has nothing but contempt for the weak-kneed hypocrisy which seeks to cloak greed under the sacred mantle of Him who, as he would pull an ox from a pit, so rescued man from suffering at the expense of His cross.

In a garden you have flowers, shrubbery, fruit-trees, and vines. The flowers differ from the vines; but in quite another sense they differ from weeds. If you tell me you prefer fruit culture rather than flower beds in your garden, I am not surprised. But if you prefer thistles, it seems strange. In a church there must ever be all varieties of character, in one sense. The man all intellect, and the man all affections; the poet and the practical; the strong in spiritual apprehension, and the weak of faith. But all ought to give unmistakable evidence that they are not the unchanged weeds which spring

out of the ground from no planting save poor fallen nature's hand. Whom Christ has received we are to receive, and those only.

Out in the wilderness the guide sinks down at length, and faints at the head of the caravan. Lying there, it is hard to be derided. Ho! a guide who is no guide, for he has lost the way! Up! on! And heavy hands pluck at him; heavy sandals kick him. This is very pitiful; but he must up, and on, or all are lost. The members of the Christian Church are guides in the moral progress of their times. If one falls in the market-place, he is spurned to be sure by wicked feet and hailed with derision. It may be very grievous to be so harshly judged. Yet he is to expect nothing else. He is a guide. He must up and forward. "Can not?" That is not the word. It is *must*. "He knows not the way to succeed in business and preserve the highest standard of commercial honor?" He is to *find* the way to the last, no matter about the first; for he is a pathfinder. "He will die!" Alas, then peace

to his ashes and heaven for his soul; but living he must lead. The Church can not follow in ethics. It can not be taught, but must teach. Nay, the Christian must not die. He must go to the Infinite Fountain, the Way, the Truth and the Life, and live, the most exalted exponent of right and justice between man and man. Neither God nor the world will suffer the professor of religion to walk anywhere but at the forefront in matters of common morality. It is well.

In the United States Patent Office are lines on lines of models, so many of them of no use. Impracticable. Who ever heard of them worked out into real use to man? Guide, take us to some famous model, reposing here in dust of years, which has been realized in actual life, the seed-thought of some grand mechanism familiar to us all. I can understand how a certain cast of mind becomes disgusted with human creeds. It exclaims, Theory! Who has ever lived out your covenant? Friend, if you be honest in this objection, it must bring you

joy to find that Christianity began, not with a formulary, but with a Life; and the words of that Life but explained what its deeds meant. Surely you will bow before the living Christ.

The stubble of last year, whitening the fields, is not the hope of the farmer's eyes; but the countless spires of young green, lying like a soft mat beneath, and pushing the stubble out of the way. A respectable aged man, who is a "Publican and Sinner" is a relict of indescribable sadness. In the markets youth is pushing up behind, wanting his place, not him. The Church and charities, which might now have engaged his priceless counsels, he has never learned to love. The hope which could say, "Come on! oh young world. I'm soon for a better!" he has never cherished. His hand tears off hardly from the grasp on this world. Long habits of criticism have ripened into sourness. The voices which once prayed for him have long since grown silent in death, and he has never taught his children to pray. The solitude of age! Go into the churches to-night,

and hear all appeals addressed to the young. If, sir, you were a lad of fourteen years, suffering the bereavements that you do, a score of hands would beckon you to the Sabbath-school, and to Christ. But your locks are white and thin. Your opinions are supposed to be fixed. The church are afraid of you, and you are left alone.

And yet who were they whom Christ called about Him in the inception of His work? not youth, but men and women in the hard realities of mature life. Matthew and Peter, well-known business men of the port of Capernaum; Luke, a physician probably already in practice. All the apostles were men full grown and ripened. Paul a scholar, later on, fully entered upon his professional career; Cornelius was not a youth. Women, who were wives and mothers, followed Him. It was a manly faith, spoken by manly lips, to the hearts of men. If He were here to-day, you would not hesitate to express to Christ the heart-sickness of a man's disappointed life.

Would it be offensive in a younger man,

mindful of his decrepitude to come, here and now to step forth reverently, offering to steady the hand of age upon its staff, saying, "My father, my older brother, Christ sat with Publicans and Sinners. It is not yet too late, shall we not seek Him? They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."

That poor working girl at the fair, standing before the exhibit of diamonds, looks down at her own ring, a paste imitation: then casts furtive glances of comparison to the cheap trinket upon the finger of her friend. If that friend's paste were a whit larger than her own paste she would be angered with envy. But before that huge brilliant in the show-case, such as she never saw before, and genuine, she is lost in admiration. Not a hateful feeling in the mind. It is too great and grand for aught but admiration.

Before a human character better than our own we are often assailed with malicious jealousy, envy and the hate of criticism. It is a fellow-man! How comes he with a purity

above us? But before Christ, the soul loses all malevolence, and is lost in worship. He is out of the sphere of possible rivalry. He is too grand for aught but adoration.

Did you observe at the Centennial Exhibition, the groups of homespun, plain housewives perpetually crowding around the display of Household Decorations? From their frugal, toilsome lives amid the mountains, they had never seen such hangings, such gorgeous fittings of lavishness. They had read of them in fiction, and all had had the fine feminine dream, vainly essayed with such simple and pathetic means as honest economy could afford. But all this, now actually before their eyes, is so unmistakably real! so exquisite—that cornice for instance, that ebony mantel—that the mind finds its ideal, its dreams realized in actual state. Let them take it all in, and carry home to copy, while they live, from memory. There can hardly be a soul so debased but Christ is to it the realization of an old ideal, supposed to have been hopeless. He is “the piece which was lost.” He is the purity,

the nobility, the grandeur dreamed about, but never met elsewhere. And He is more than the complement of our dreams,—a revelation.

I confess to you that, standing, in the ardent days of youth, amid those vast crowds which wept over the murdered President of the Republic, as his remains were slowly proceeding to their western grave, I trembled lest I verged upon a forbidden adoration of a human being. Such sobs were in the air, such homage of muffled drums and minor strains from dead marches, such lofty panegyrics, but most of all such knockings of my own heart demanding voice, that decency cried halt, recalling that the public mind was at the very summer solstice about the altars of adoration. It is a terrible craving of the soul—this homage to a saviour. The mass are defenceless, are groping in the dark, are slow of intellect and selfish at heart. A defender with a torch, with brilliant mental gifts and apparent love for us is a priceless boon. His person is dearer to us than our life itself. I can understand the Greek and Roman

apotheosis: the blind infatuation of the Swedes for Charles the XIIth. The former had never heard of the Son of man. The latter had lost sight of Him. Now with Jesus Christ the Pattern Man I am restrained by no prohibition. Looking upon Him I may give free rein to my soul. Bow down to this Person, kiss His feet of flesh and blood, adore the grand spirit. It is more than permitted. It is duty. Duty dies, giving birth to privilege. They who unhitch the horses from the carriage of an illustrious man blush, in cooler moments, to remember themselves dragging at its traces. If Christ Jesus walked these streets, I should have no after-thoughts of shame had I rapturously flung my garments upon the stones He trod. I refuse, with a shudder, to kneel on the Roman pavement with the populace at sight of papal processions; but if Jesus of Nazareth were passing by, at this curb I might remain bowed, with clasped hands, till the Holy Form faded out of sight. This loyalty to the person of Christ is the grand passion of the disciples in every age. The love of Christ constraineth us. No earthly love parallels it: not the as yet untarnished af-

fection of youth for youth, worshipping the very ground on which the beloved treads; not eighty years sitting opposite eighty years, wiping dim spectacles and thinking of all the years which no words can depict to the old soul-mate; not the whirlwind of ecstasy with which the young mother clasps the precious form of her first-born. All of this and more may the saint bestow upon his Saviour. It is the one dream of life to see Him as He is above, and be satisfied alone with the Chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely.

I watched a colony of ants, beneath my hammock constructing their abode, twenty minutes, thirty minutes, two hours. When the edifice was finished to the last capstone granule, I dropped a pebble down upon its dome, and stooped to look again. The workmen's stark surprise, the hasty muster of the settlement, the consultation swift and prompt decision, these I saw. They throw a hundred arms about the rock, and fail. Then, mark you, they excavate beneath and, leaping on it, sink it. Then a

thousand ready hands pile up again the graceful dome with all its former symmetry.

Then I wondered, and called others. These tiny creatures had built for us an altar there, to the strange, the Unknown God, whose line has gone out through all the earth. We worshipped there.

Men say that down these aisles is the way to altars. So say I, reverencing the Church. But, to one who will look and think, where shall his path lie on earth which leads not to altars sacred unto God?

Over the grave of Jesus Christ they erected no costly stone which should keep a pyramid's watch upon the plains of time; no bronze of regal attitude; no temple made with hands. But they planted this—a monumental ceremony, meeting to remember Him with chastened joy and holy festival of worship, saying, "It is the Lord's Day." Children should be taught to cherish Sunday as they would the headstones of their fathers. Aye, and more, for this is the day that saw Him rise. It marks

the spot where He lay, but where He lies no longer. It testifies, more eloquent than pointing hand or mortuary marbles, "He is risen."

Upon the upper waters of the Connecticut, where the river breaks through gates of green and granite mountains there is a spot of echoes. One might shout and send his call a mile away, to yonder bluff, and sharply clear it would return again, along the sedgy meadows and the placid stream. A fit place for one to train the voice he some time meant to use in Gospel invitations, for such a test taught skill and health. To shout a noble text for the listening earth and hear the echo send it back, was to deceive one's self that the great hills beyond had somehow heard and answered from their cloud-capped peaks,

"Come, and come quickly."

"Whosoever will, let him come."

As if the very air was full of unseen speakers. One could keep that word, come, bounding back and forth like a silver shuttle, bearing golden thread, weaving heaven and earth together.

At length the river bank grows spectral, unearthly, in the twilight; and a boy would troll a roulade to reinstate this prosy world again.

It has been thought that that startling repetition of the invitation which is recorded on the New Testament's last page was in reality an interchange of ecstatic longing. The revelator cries, in view of all he had foreseen, "Come, Lord Jesus." The Holy Spirit answers, "Come." The Church with eager patience echoes, "Come," and all who hear are directed to repeat the cry. Then Christ replies from out the heavens, hungry for the lost man's return, "Come ye, whosoever will." The air was palpitating with that word, as John stood upon the mountain-top of vision.

Sinner, it is the pausing for you that keeps the longing Church and Christ from clasping the eternal reunion. It is till the Gentiles are brought in that these twain are waiting

An aged man sat this afternoon in his arm-chair, and, taking the spectacles from his eyes, fell asleep, in the rays of the setting sun. As

he slept he dreamed his youth over again. The spectacles fell out of his fingers to the floor, and he dreamed that they belonged to an old man at whose knee he had only been playing with them. His dull hearing restored, caught again the voices of his little children, some of them from earth long gone. Again he sat at table where every sort of food had for him good relish; while at the foot of the board, as plain as day—suggested doubtless by the picture on the wall—the young mother of his brood, the quaint old teaset then almost as new as a wedding present, under her fair, round arms. Again he strode forth to his work, without crutch or staff, a man among men. Oh! what air-drawn visions of far-away youth sometimes recur to age.

He wakes, and rubs his eyes, and is alone and old. Straightening the stiff and tottering legs, he goes, adjusting his glasses, to gaze upon her picture on the twilight-shadowed wall—a dream.

Yet this is the figure the Psalmist uses to depict the forgiveness of sins. It is a renewing of youth, unto bones waxed old through sense of guilt. Especially is it such to advanced age.

The least of its effects are those upon the body; yet it brightens the countenance, erects the carriage, warms the palm and opens it. It is better than medicine to have become at peace with God. It restores and sweetens memory. One is no longer afraid to remember, since broken vows and dishonored pleadings from beloved lips are no longer accusers. There is no longer a lion of ancient crime in the path. The affections and intellect receive new life. It is beginning life over again, for three-score years and ten is a babe in Christ. Old things are passed away and all become new. Best of all, it contains the promise of eternal youth in the land beyond the grave.

Speaking of cares—the strongest, grandest natures feel them most. Cut a worm in two, and both ends will crawl off. In higher organisms vitality is more vulnerable. After forty years of life a great heart and capable brain are loaded with countless cares. He is a true son caring for aged parents; a brother interested for the companions of his cradle; a husband and

father with the cares these words imply; a business partner on whose integrity many depend; a citizen whom school boards and municipal committees claim; an administrator of his dead friend's estate, with widow and orphan looking to his sagacity; a manager of charitable institutions; a burden-bearer in his church; a counsellor to a world of acquaintances who from the earth's end sue for his kind wisdom. His days are full, evenings broken, even nights employed. Oh! to be such a man, on whom human society feeds as if he were bread!

It is such men in their strength who cry out, "O! Lord! We know not how we became so loaded. But here we stand, and plead thy promise; casting all our care on thee, for thou carest for us."

Much more then, the weak and helpless claim the privilege. The work-girl, in the gray of the morning, puts back the cap from the aged mother's head yet on the pillow, and holding that dear face between her thin, brave hands, speaks good cheer, "For He careth for us, and this week shall match the rent with my wages." On the stairs of the tenement house, rudely ac-

costed, she shrinks into herself with the thought, "He careth for me." On the street, meeting another like-minded and older, they walk five blocks out of their way, that her companion may throw a kiss at the window of the public nursery where she has loaned her child while a widow earns her loaf, and both say, "He careth for us." In the dusty defilements of the factory their eyes often meet with glance that reassures as it seems to repeat, "He careth for us." On the ferry, crowded by the hoofs of splendid steeds which drag the carriages of more fortunate women, they repeat, lest their hearts grow sick by the invidious comparison, "Nevertheless God careth for us." And He does. If it were in my heart to injure any human being for selfish gain, the last I would dare to lift hand against would be one of these little ones who believe in God. Thus strong and weak unite in clinging to this promise, "Cast all your care on Him, for He careth for you."

There are within this great city upper chambers by the score, which hide the ill-starred vic-

tims from whose skin and bones hideous disease has crushed out every trace of the lovable. There is nothing, nothing left to love. It sits a staring wreck, speaking gibberish, to watch and tend whom is to feel the contagion of a madness, like. The room smells of old fevers. It is year after year of agony to all. A son might say, "It is not my father. He knows me not, nor thanks, nor utters rational complaint." The proudest Roman of the Palatine would have abandoned such a one to death. Yet they who serve, serve gladly, having heard a voice that kindles deeper fires than natural affection. "I was sick and in prison and ye visited me, naked and ye clothed me."

There is many a child, born to no sweet welcome; born the token of sin; born to the lowest poor, to whom an added mouth means added peril of scant bread; born may be with idiocy or pitiable deformity written on its tiny face. The boasted classic age would have cast it forth to perish, but for the most part now they dare not; they would not, dare they; for the human heart has ripened under Gospel day. Over every little form there seems to stand Another,

keeping guard and saying, "I was a stranger—most strange!—and ye took me in." A Gospel of goodness. It would make men kinder than the kindred tie, and love as Christ loved us.

Some men laboriously perfect plans and specifications of the spiritual building, the type of piety they intend to construct—when they get ready. Years pass, and these builders' plans lie yellow aging and dust-covered upon the upper shelves of the mind—to be found there as awful witnesses against them at the Judgment. Amid the northern hills I have seen the farmer erect most noble barns, expensively housing sheep and oxen, the animal part of his possessions, but himself dwelling with his family in the same miserable old rookery where he was born. He gets in debt so deeply over the out-buildings that the plans for his own abode lie disused in the old brick oven where he keeps his papers.

How many grand ideals are sketched by youth, in Sunday-school days. Air-built temples for the Christ of the future, they are never

reduced to substantial reality; for life is soon so deeply in debt for the shelter of appetites, vanities, and pleasures that men freely confess they "can not afford to attempt the Christian life."

Alone in the broad open fields, how every thing preaches to a sensitive mind the folly of deceit! The fields, from whence you root up a tuft of grass, smelling the earth smell, which seems to say, "I am the same brown earth of a thousand years ago"; the horizon full of light! light! everywhere revelation and no concealment; plucked wheat-heads identical in shape and function since the Pyramids; the fidelity of spring verdure and autumn russet, from age to age; walking amid old trees whose imposing aisles, yesterday clouded may be, when a swift storm bent things from uprightness, but now, as if each stalk had a conscience, lifted up, or lifting, to their eternal rectitude once more. Of these trees you observe, as you pass, that branches befouled in the momentary gale are repentant, instantly untwining with many a shower of crystal tears, standing so calm, in

the warm flood of sunshine, that they remind you of the collective conscience of an epoch of mankind, which always tends to integrity and justice, after passion and prejudice.

You cast yourself down, embracing the dear old mother sod. It is the other incarnation! You turn to look upward through wood, cloud and light, wondering how you could ever have been tempted to make cloud, wood, light, or nature in any form to express a falsehood on your titles, markets, looms, or anvils. As well attempt to make the Maker falsify.

“Can not you believe me, my son? I have seen the world, and prophesy as true as heaven you are on the road to ruin.”

“No. I will prove it for myself then.”

The old father rushes from the interview of two good hours. It is the last effort of years of expostulation. Tears of vexation mingle with the tears of love upon his furrowed cheeks.

“As well argue with the winds, Mary. Let him go and find it out for himself. I would have saved him, my child. But now, there is

this much of satisfaction, I shall have my—my—”

“Your revenge, father?” exclaims the weeping mother.

“I did not use the word. Still I shall see what I shall see.”

Ah! when the catastrophe comes, neither party feels as he thought he would. There is a letter from afar.

“Sick and ready to die in a prison hospital,” so the chaplain writes from over seas away.

“Now, John, your revenge.”

But he puts his arms about the old mate, and is gone the next instant, over seas away.

From the hospital cot the boy moans out,

“Why don’t you say it, father?”

“Say what, my son?”

“Say ‘I told you it would turn out thus.’ For you were right, and I was wrong.”

“Hush! hush! It is an empty nest at home, and a wandering bird here, as said Isaiah. Pray God He forgive us all. Thank heaven! we *may*, not *must*, repent.”

Some thirty odd years ago a young man stood on the banks of the Connecticut River, where it bursts through the green gateways of Southern Vermont, prospecting for his settlement and life-work. As he paused along the beautiful narrow valley, there rumbled and jolted, with many a cloud of dust, with crack of whip and scramble of hoofs the lumbering stage-coach, northward bound. He counted the passengers; for he had been solicited to invest his earnings in this "old, established, thorough-braced line." But the youth had heard the scream of the steam whistle across Boston flats, and decided that long before he put on the spectacles of age the railway would be girdling these mountains. The conclusion made him a rich man.

Now the political machinery of our times for instance—do you expect, young men, that the bad, the dubious element in society will continue during your working years to control municipal affairs, legislatures and congresses, with briberies and conspiracies of idlers who have failed in every business of their own? Or do you believe that there shall be soon a revival of Christianity? Thousands of young

men are in training for public life upon the supposition that sharpness and intrigue are to win in the next fifty years as in the past. If Christianity revives, such lives will be failures. Thousands more, upon the same hypothesis, are resolving to let society severely alone, leading lives of respectable selfishness. What care they for public schools, for organized benevolences, for the formation of public opinion or correction of public morals? They mean to make money, abandoning the whole hopeless struggle to elevate humanity. If Christianity revives, these lives are worse than failures; they are dead weights, to be shaken off long before the day of triumph: for triumph Christ will.

What would you say of the employee whom, after years of failures on his own hook, you have taken up, if he now divests himself of all interest in the careful use of utensils, raw material, or the perpetuity of the business; whose only concern is for his weekly wage? When a man becomes a servant of Christ, all his former natural instinct to accumulate and to preserve

his accumulations against the tooth of time, now should become sanctified to the new Master. A good man's first desire is to save his own soul. His next, to save his own life-work; to do that which will endure. The mendicant friar is not the type for our times.

I can understand how a good man should desire to draw his life out of the furnace of business before he dies, and cast some portion of it into enduring bronze; which shall stand in public places with a torch in its hand to light the feet of the young. If he builds an asylum bearing his name, only the impure will attribute a mean motive of ostentation. He thus preserves his personality. A life is more potent as a preacher than multitudes of impersonal theories.

If the vine, torn down by this week's storm, could speak as it lies mud-trampled and entangled, it would say to the strong-handed gardener as he lifts it,

"I am so glad you are come! Yes, straighten me by force; break off my useless members that knot me down! Hasten, for I thought, as I lay

here, of the June so near, and other vines ready while I was not."

There is a joy in correction to the soul which realizes its fallen condition, a delight in being stoutly handled by the resistless Spirit working its restoration. All winter long, while watching this insecure and swaying vine through my window, it has seemed to say,

"Oh! for strength to keep in place! Why do they not fasten me with hooks and cords and sturdy new trellis bars?"

There is a longing in many a young passion-stormed life for some strong arm to keep, to restrain. A priceless assurance comes with conversion. "Thou shalt be held. I will keep thee, steadfast and immovable, in the calm of my peace."

The bank president says,

"You confess voluntarily that you defrauded us, five years ago?"

"Yes," responds the trembling youth.

"And that you have made restoration with interest in full?"

“Yes.”

“Boy, you should not have told me then. Get out of this bank. We can not employ a known thief.”

Nay, the young man was right. It is always duty to confess as well as to make restitution, and take the consequences. But alas! for him who has sinned against a mean man. It requires great nobility of contrition to confess, but equal nobility of wisdom and charity to be confessed to. Thousands are ruined just here. The majority of men are not large or pure enough to receive heart-burdens of guilt. They suspect that if we spoke so much, we left more unspoken: or that we want to knit up the ravelled sleeve of our fortunes. We know not how to convince them of genuine desires to be better, and dread the long probation before they shall see that we are not thoroughly bad. Hence we too often turn away, silent, feeling that to speak would be only to ruin ourselves in their good opinion; and our load is still on us.

Happy the father who is so pure and loving, pure and wise to discern betwixt the evil and

the good, that a child feels he can tell any thing to father, for he will understand and not utterly cast off. Happy the head of a great business house, so noble that the humblest clerk astray is drawn to him in confession,—as the sun draws damps out of noisome ravines by warmth and exaltation.

There is this peculiarity about confession to God, that instantly the soul is made sure He knows, not only the guilt, but all the longings of the soul to be better. It is not only an exposure of sin, but also of our little virtue, the virtue of struggle before we fell as well as holier present desires. We hold dialogue with One who can appreciate all, and needs no labored explanations. The world too often misses this sweetest ray of light that shines upon confession.

Daybreak is usually a moment of silence and motionless surprise to inanimate nature. The leaves scarce tremble on the bough; the great winds have not yet begun to rise; the bars of massy color lie in cloudland, with no stir,

across the gates of the east. Every thing seems to stand with uplifted hands of wonder at the coming of the light. It is not till quite an interval has elapsed that movement begins over wood and field.

With the human soul the first moments of absolute detection in fault before God are speechless. The thought that He knows all paralyzes us. Light floods the whole being. Evasion is impossible; so also for the time seems prayer. It is not strange that our friend, in the early conviction of revival season, is reticent, and seeks solitude; that he does not as yet begin to act. The soul will recover from its astonishment at itself, its wonder at the divine uncoverings. The winds will soon rise and the sweet rain of tears follow, all in good time.

The jury-room is too often a place of mere animalism. He is a Christian but hungry, or sleepy, or both; it is time to go home. The first impulse that asserts itself from within or without carries the day. There is no conscience in it, not to speak of exercise of reason.

But the day of revelations will come. The night's work shall be tried so as by fire; and one will some time know in the clear light of eternity, whether Almighty God accepts the hour's work, or casts it away, righting the poor victim. The burning of hay, wood, and stubble must cover us with conscious sense of loss. The endurance of gold, silver, precious stones must afford us self-gratulation or "reward."

Every time I cast my vote, or adjudicate upon a neighbor's character, or write a critique on his book, or range myself upon questions of public reform, let me remember that I am doing work of which I shall know, some time, somewhere, whether God accepts it in the great edifice of human society. Good men honestly opposed the American Revolution, and prayed for its overthrow. They have long since, in the eternal world, unsaid with regret, the sayings of earth. The saddest obstacles in the way of human progress have not been the wickedness of the wicked; but the blind prejudices of good men. A boy with hesitation lifts his hand against even the error of his father. Let me bind no fetters upon the young and shining

limbs of the coming Generation; but rather put such stepping-stones beneath its feet as shall remain when I am long gone.

It is one thing to start into a country road with which you are so familiar that you instantly recognize, nay, foresee every acclivity and descent, every water-bar, just where the brook will appear dashing along-side, the bridge beyond, the bend to the south, the farmhouse with the red gable and the next with the white, and the winding home lane at the end. It is quite another thing to say, as you pass into the wood, "I never went this way before. Yet, because the guide-post reads this *is* the way, walk I in it. Come hill where I supposed there would be valley; trend southward where I think the general direction should have been to the east; come unfamiliar dwellings with strange faces at the windows; yet I'll on, to prove that it leads to fireside welcome and repose."

A great fundamental tenet of the creed like the eternal punishment of the wicked is to you the familiar road. Your faith sees the whole

length, so far at least that you are never troubled over it. Your friend, looking upon his dead father's picture, remembering the sinner's death he died, yet poor *father!* is perplexed and heart-sore. Still it is written, flee the wrath to come. Those awful delineations of Christ are really there, upon the page of Scripture. He says, "I'll do it, do it! by force of faith I'll walk the road. It is not for me to know more than that my soul is saved through the blood of the Lamb."

Emerging at last into the full light of eternity you two men stand side by side. Happy you who never had a doubt. But happy also he who obeying, treading down doubt, has perfected faith by works, and wrought his way painfully to clearness of vision.

There is a process in chemistry by which thin invisible vapors are poured past a cold standard of metal; at first much vapor mingling with the air, not touching the standard, yet some is chilled, precipitated, frozen. Pour on more and more. Soon you have a monolith of shining

crystal and increasing every hour. There is a strange crystallization of works into faith. That which a man does often is transmitted into belief. The young convert, at first hardly knows why he goes to the Lord's Supper. After years of repetitious observance the ordinance is a belief, a cluster of realities too vast for description. Do you desire undaunted faith in prayer? Pray often. Do you wish full confidence in the ordinances of God's house? Observe them faithfully. Would you believe, as your friend does, with no slightest shade of doubt, in the Scriptures as inspired? Treat them as such.

That piteous cry, "I wish I could believe! I want to believe." What is it but the assent of the spirit, the grosser intellect the while not yet yielding? I have stood in drought-smitten fields praying, "Oh, west winds, will ye ever come, bringing rain?" My dull flesh, the hand uplifted, replied, "There is no air-current to be felt." The crisp wheat-stalks moveless, "We feel no wind." The stiff twigs upon gnarled old tree-top, bearing glossy leafage motionless in the

deathly heat, "Not a breath stirs us." Almost ready to despair I look high up, where, over the tree-tops, the white-winged seed of a thistle, journeying unmistakably eastward! Yes, and now from knolls along the tillage here and there, on every hand the sensitive down is feeling the breath too spiritual for coarse-fibred rock maples, telling that the winds are on the way. In eight and forty hours the showers will be here, and then a gale to shake even these forest giants. The tearful moan, "I wish I could believe," is the response of the higher, more sensitive affections of the heart. The head will feel the impulse by and by. With the heart man believeth unto righteousness. There are altitudes of our soul-life which are amenable to influences and aspirations, not contrary to, but above, reason.

In the initial stages of conversion the soul seems to itself self-moved; as if its own free power of choice was alone involved. It wills to cease a life of sin and set out upon a pilgrimage of righteousness, as one might resolve to

arise from one of these pews, resolved to go home. But soon, and especially as time advances, a soul seems to itself to have been like a leaf fallen by the roadside in autumn; powerless to move till great winds come catching it up with resistless power of motion, bearing it on, high up over the dead, level earth, and into exalted realms of the upper air. The soul rests upon the Holy Spirit, which like a Sacred Breath, or Wind, as Christ said, transports it into virtues all His own. So is every one that is born of the Spirit.

A tiny rivulet upon the sides of the mountain was born of last night's May shower. Trickling down the slopes of a ravine, it is caught and dammed up with twigs and dead leaves, foaming and mud-tinged. It would run clear, if it could pursue its destiny to the sea. It is like the human heart, obstructed in its motion towards God, the end of its being. This enchained streamlet has a strange inward propulsion, as if it knew it belonged to the distant deep; but how shall it find the way through the wide,

blue landscape of dusty absorption? It wants a larger body, like, yet unlike itself, belonging both to the mountains and to the ocean; as Jesus Christ belonged both to humanity and to Deity, partaking of both natures and connecting them. If now these fettered waters could burst into the mighty river flowing near, it should have access through the son to the father of waters, the wide, far-away sea. The river seems to invite, saying, "I am the way": as Jesus Christ said unto human souls, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

I am the youngest son, if you please; and in a mad rage of disobedience have played the prodigal. Time passes and my hut upon the southern pampas has become dear to me, with all its rude discomforts. I have almost forgotten my mother-tongue, in these thirty years. I am not poor; but such barbaric wealth! I love goats; have nuggets of gold strung like beads under my thatch; and companions of dusky skins. Memory has a little place; there is the

sleeve of a garment patched by a mother's fingers the last time the sailor boy was in port, which is treasured. Yet how feeble is the impulse to return. It is never strong enough to take me out of the wilderness. Think now of my elder brother who finding me, stands in my hovel door with the invitation, "You are wanted at home." I do not say any illustration can accurately parallel Christ's coming. But I ask you; does there not come to me from outside of me something else beside the invitation? namely, a great desire to go, and a resolution that I will! It is borne in upon me from without. It is the me, my memory, my will, my love, my feet that walk to the coast, yet the not me. I am set on fire.

Arriving at the fireside, over the thousands of miles, I say,

"My father, you have brought me back again!"

"I?" the old man blessed asks. "Did not you use your own feet, and come of yourself?"

"Yes; but I should have never come, had you not drawn me. All the thanks belong to you. I should have stopped, discouraged, a score of

times, but that ten thousand invisible cords seemed tugging me on,—to you and peace.”

One may hardly hope any illustration will fully mirror the work of the Holy Spirit; but there surely is an influence from without us, which enables the rebel heart to do, what he before feebly desired to do, but lacked the power to do—accept the invitation of the elder brother whom the father sent. And strangely one, as in a trinity, seem these three. The End, the Means, the Power.

At the foot of the garden, just under the magnolia whose branches in full flower overshoot the street, you saw the pile of rags—a drunkard. The petals of the magnolia fall on him; on his coarse muddy feet, on his hatless head. Three pure leaves of this munificent flower had fluttered down upon his swart, bare breast, which hardly heaved in this sleep worse than death. And one lay in the outstretched, nerveless palm, beyond the arm that formed a pillow. God made them both, tree and man. One has kept its first estate, one has been dishonored.

Christ came to reconcile the two:—in a beautiful world man made again beautiful. Consider the lilies of the field. How much more would he clothe you, oh! ye of little faith!

As I stand in the glory of a May morning,—this florescence, this leafage, this verdure—I am sure nothing here was copied. The Creator had never seen a Daffodil before He made the far-away ancestor of all these. He first thought out these shapes, from the riches of His own mind: then clothed them in majestic incarnation. How grave and exalted, how beautiful are thy thoughts, O God! It is in looking abroad that I worship thee.

If I paint cattle, I put in mountains, hills, valleys, trees, farmhouse and water—the modern painter's cattle must always be standing knee-deep in a placid stream, lazily swinging in token of content, whether in fact one sees them thus employed once in a hundred real landscapes. But whatever I have is grouped around

the cattle as the centre. Suppose I change my painting to a mountain scene. I still have hills, valleys, trees, and human dwellings. Again I put in living forms. But cattle, men, and every feature now are grouped around the mountain as the centre. If I sketch the farmhouse in its turn, all elements do obeisance to the dwelling. When the Holy Spirit of God changes man's "disposition," soul, by converting grace, the animal nature is still there; the intellect, affections, volitions, appetites are still there. The love of life, the ambition, the thrift of business are still there. But all are regrouped and harmonized around the mountain's base of Divine Love. Love of Christ is the centre and focus of the new life. Eternal life becomes the outlook of the whole soul. Before, the intellect, or affections, or any one of the natural elements of disposition, occupied the chief place, in a disturbing malformation.

A geranium was wheeled out by the gardener and dumped down by the farm-road, as useless, last April. It turned over on its side in the

first rain-storm and began to grow, neglected and alone. The hay-cart bent it nearly double in June, but it saved a third of its stalk and was well thriving again by August. An ox, toiling with a load of early harvest, grasped at it, tore it up by the roots, mistaking it for something palatable and whisked it away. Settling into an old disused rut, it availed itself of the shower that very night; and grew so beautiful by the late September that the gardener was glad to take its flowering tribute, flaming among the gray stubble of withered grass around, and give it place upon his master's table. There are some human hearts that possess this marvellous vitality of hope, and high resolve to thrive, wherever their hard lot. They shall be before the throne, when the great Master cometh to make up his jewels.

A man may hold sound doctrine in an unsound way. Salvation is "all of grace and not of ourselves. It is the gift of God." That is true. But suppose he magnifies one side of this, till he conceives of himself—"a poor sinner, and

God knows it, but Christ is my merit"—as in a boat, lying prone, inactive, lulled to sleep, with nothing to do. He will be careless of business probity over in the store, so long as he misses no prayer-meeting; he will be harsh in the family, so he marshals the boys to morning prayers; he will exculpate himself though he shows to disadvantage beside some unconverted man of fairer life. "Oh yes, but for all he's more upright than I, he is not a Christian. He is self-righteous. I have no righteousness." No. That's all too evident. "But he trusts in self. I do not trust in myself." Evidently. Oh, my brother, will you seethe the kid in its mother's milk? Shall the very cross, erected to save from sin, tempt to sin? One may kill himself with water, sweet water, with which he doth burst himself. Can you not see that you hold sound doctrine in an unsound way, since it produces such fruits? Christ neither teaches, nor suffers any soul to be, an idle incumbent upon the Divine Passion. Correct yourself. "Faith without works is dead."

You who are feeble from birth, disadvantaged in the race of life because you have not the endurance, the strength, the eyes, ears, or mental gifts of your brother; there are two courses open to you. You may trace the line of genealogy, arraigning sire and grandsire to the fourth generation; yes, the whole human race, and cry out, "It is an accursed race! Every thing about it is wrong. I hate it. Why does God make men of such stock!" And thus crawl along this human highway, ascerbed and misanthropic. Thousands keep you company on those dark paths. Or you may straighten your bent body, looking upward with the assurance that, while sin is the origin of all our woes, since it is not your sin that fastened these bands of birthright imbecility, you need not ask who? where? or when? It is that the works of God might be manifest in you. Christ, I yield my sick self into thine hands, that, in restoring me, thou mayest show forth thy glory.

How? Will He heal the blindness, as of old? Perhaps not. But we are to take that wider view that contemplates the lasting welfare of the soul.

Three lads are born upon a New Hampshire farm. Two have the heart-beats of young steers, and develop the brawn of bronze. One is pale, of languid pulse, whose muscles are as soft as infants' flesh. The two stalwarts go to the field, go to roistering huskings, go to barn-raising and hard cider, go to rude bucolic callings, but seem never likely to go to their knees. Whiteface sits at home, drumming the window-pane far into the night, watching the astral heavens as he awaits his late-returning brothers. He reclines upon the sunny bench at the south of the house, under the falling leaves, while the strong ones bend with the October harvesters, and thinks and dreams. He is much at his mother's knee. He is her own boy, in cast and growth of character. She speaks to him of spiritual things, while the really fine mind opens as she disseminates truth from a woman's intuitions. He is to be a thinker. He learns to commune with her Christ, familiarly. Countless temptations of appetite and mad ambition pass him by unsolicited. To be imprisoned is to mark the sunset, to think on God at His work. To be tied to a chair is to train ivy

and domestic flowers above the warm hearth of winter. To be a sufferer is to feel for the suffering till, from noisings abroad, one's room is a neighborhood asylum for weary hearts. Who so familiar with the sacred page? So that Whiteface becomes the sweetest spirit in the home, leading lion and tiger by the turn of a thin forefinger, marshalling the stocking-footed hill-men, father, sons and hired helpers, each night within his chamber for his good night salutations before they climb up under the rafters. While on Thanksgiving Day the sick one's sunlit corner is a very heaven. Who shall deny that his misfortunes were that the works of God might be manifest in him! As for those robust ones—God has his own way of dealing with them; we are studying now the invalid.

We admit, nay, assert, that true and defensible contentment can have no rational basis but the faith of the cross. If this week Thursday, which ends the month, there shall cross the ferry a weary man and unemployed: standing in the crowd with Dives' horses just behind him

champing their bits and spattering him with foam; he bethinking him that another rent-day is at hand and his hand empty; oh! if he had what these chains cost—grasping them lest the proud hoofs tread upon him—aye, what the varnish on these glittering wheels cost; if, dejected, at length he bursts into the presence of his waiting, praying wife, whose cheery “what’s the news?” must be answered with “don’t ask me!”—then and there shall be enacted such scenes of Christian triumph as have become familiar household tales of late in this suffering land. Far into the midnight she argues and he moans, the children sweetly sleeping; he prone upon the cot, she with the open Testament in her lap, sitting at his side.

“I tell you there is nothing but blind Fate.”
This he.

She—“But, John, if one could believe there is a Personal God infinite in power and love.”

“Well, what then?”

“If a man believes that God to be ordering every thing for the best unto all His creatures, especially unto such as submit to His will.”

“Mary! But to see you and them sleeping

yonder, shelterless to-morrow and without food the next day! and I a strong fellow, the victim of no vice, nor cowardice, only bad luck!"

"If a man believes in Jesus Christ, and that the government is upon His shoulders, that He is a Good Shepherd, that He notes the fall of a sparrow, that He clothes the lily of the field and counts the hairs of our head, that He is wise to determine our lot, as goes the hymn you used to sing—"

And now, in very agony the poor fellow digs his fingers into the ragged coverlet, writhing to hide his face of tears; while she, rising to her feet all glowing, pursuing her advantage, fairly holding aloft the Book whose fluttering leaves have lent her this impassioned ecstasy,—she discourses in such power as is sacred to that poor home's seclusion. "If we believe in that eternal future which He has gone to prepare for us,—for you, John, and for me,—then our light affliction which is but for a moment we can bear. This is the contentment and the peace which passeth all understanding."

Bless God for such ministrants at the inconspicuous altars of lowly homes.

Receive is the one word that describes the healthful conduct of human life. We receive being at birth, we do nothing but receive for the months that follow; receive mother-milk, clothing, warmth, care. The lad receives protection, advice, and wisdom, if indeed he does receive; for, rejecting these, he rejects his destiny, to find out his own way which is death. We receive pickaxe and pen, and our place in the world. Old men smile, as they hear proud youth talk of "hewing a way," or "winning a way" through life, to fortune, as if there could be any path discovered or cut out, that was not hard-beaten like a Broadway by the thousands who have trodden it before us. In all honorable vocations the road is Patience, Industry, Frugality, Knowledge. And, if one go higher, Repentance, the New Heart through Christ, and the common gate to Heaven. The youth makes his experiment. At times he seems to be hewing, winning, and inventing; but afterwards reviewing, he perceives he was but lifting up a hewing hand to cut away the obstacles to his receiving. As when one bursts a prison wall, or emerges toilfully from a wood, he has but to receive

the down-pouring sun. Old age testifies, "All my battles have in fact been against Self, that I might not reject, against Others that I might not be defrauded of, the good which God meant me to *receive*."

You have lost a friend by death; and for a time in the freshness of your grief it has seemed that possibly that disembodied spirit might be near you, might be guarding you. Might? *Must* is the word. But in time the consciousness suffers abatement. You are not quite so sure of unseen companionships. After years this spiritual sensitiveness has faded thinly, and "Where are the dead"? You confess you can not locate them.

The consciousness of Christ, however, to the true Christian, is abiding; it increases with the years. He uses the words "see," "hear," and "feel." Moreover, to attempt to realize the spirits of departed just men made perfect is disturbing, and, if carried too far, unhealthy. The sane mind pauses early on that giddy tracking, lest it lose its balance.

The realization of the ascended Christ on the

contrary is soothing, hallowing, and most healthful. It is but to live up to one's privilege. Let us conclude then that spiritual sensibility is permitted to apprehend the Saviour; but forbidden as yet the loved and lost. The one is natural, the other unnatural, for we are attuned to nature, but the unnatural destroys. What may we know of Heaven? Very little beyond the fact that it is where Christ is. In all the confusion of the mind's pictures of that land, this alone is distinct, clear, and in accordance with fact—Christ is there.

There are souls which are like dwellings shut up. A little loop-hole is left behind lambrequins, thick laces, and shutters of dull oak, barely sufficient to save gas. The poor sunbeams steal and stream instantly in, laughing and seeming to say, as they creep, flicker, fight backward and forward in varying battle with deep shadows, "Let us in, admit all our troop. How dusty you are here, and loaded with the breath of mould." With long tapering fingers they point bravely out the stains of ancient pict-

ure cords along the walls, and noisome thumb-marks by the doors. They smite with their golden rod the puffy wounds that moths have made, till they smoke like small volcanoes. They linger with an argent halo around the pictured face of friend departed, lending it a beauty to rebuke and stir forgetfulness to tears. They spy out piles of tattered music, chained in unused racks, and read the titles of noble volumes standing like dead monks in crypts; while slipping away one sunbeam struggles vainly at the rusty key. "Oh let us in! Our name is legion, rapping, pouring, flooding this grim house without, and we will draw the colors of pride from your carpets, making them home rugs of comfort, so that children shall frolic here, the cricket sing at the hearth, with health married to happiness."

Yet it is pitiful, how people strive to shut out the light. It is the Saviour's own figure. He is the true light that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world, if we prefer not darkness rather. A Christian should be the wisest of men in casuistry, in all knowledge of what is right between man and man.

We sometimes think a man will serve self better than any one else. Not so. The most faithful work we ever do is service of another in the performance of a commission, when love moves the heart. We each offer to self every day a fidelity, a measure of honor, and veracity, with which self is quite satisfied, but which we would consider too poor an article to present to others. A man breaks a secret good resolution with less hesitation than his spoken word given to another. The noblest self-respect is ennobled by the consciousness of a heavenly Master. Considering heart secrets, the best of men will bear watching, and improve under the consciousness of an All-seeing Eye.

The ascended Christ offers for us a continuous atonement. A certain youth who is twenty years old to-day was not in existence when you, brother of the gray beard, sought pardon through Christ. When Christ died on Calvary, in the Great Yesterday, were none of us. Yet when you of mellow years, or when this youth of to-day would seek salvation, each must look

up to the Christ who in heaven pleads for each in turn His death once suffered.

That youth forgiven will still have need of Christ. Forgiven in this moment number one, living on to moment number two, he has not lived guiltless. Between moment number two and year number forty, he will have had constant need of an atonement, to propitiate for the imperfections of a sinful, though a "converted," human life.

Moreover, the sins of that prenatal period—I speak of the *new* birth—are still his. As a matter of fact he committed them. Christ's pardon does not falsify history. What has been, has been, whatever may be afterward. Sin deserves penalty. Why does it not fall even yet? Because of the continuous mercy of the sacrificial Lord.

If to-day I wrong you by defalcation and, summoned into your presence, you point to the secretary drawer where you declare is the evidence to ruin me, I may plead my remorse. I trust in your mercy, though acknowledging that by every law human and divine I ought to suffer. You assure me that, not alone because I repent,

but because you love me and I have sued your love you will forgive; you will assume all the suffering resultant from my wrong to your affairs—saving you remind me that the suffering I have myself already experienced, and must always in a measure experience so often as I recall my sin, no one can take. Whatever is, is. Now I walk forth, with head erect, happy in the ascertainment that for your love's sake you will never, never proceed against me. To remember the crime is yet to regret, but also to be warmed into a glow of gratitude towards you which whelms my pangs. Turn over ten years of my future. As a matter of fact am I not yet a defaulter, though since living in probity? And does not default merit the prison in the next decade as truly as now? Why does not the penalty fall? Because you are yet holding it back, as in all these years—to think of which, moment by moment, is to love, trust, and thank you.

Man may aver that he has burned the drawerful of records. But can Jehovah destroy the records of a life? They are His memory. To forget is to cease to be. Forever and forever, youth of twenty, just forgiven by the eter-

nal Saviour, it would be possible to proceed against you, so far as proof and desert are concerned. Yet forever and forever, now that you cry in faith, has He put your sins behind His back. Age on age thou art a creature of His loving mercy. The past at least is secure. Yet you need Him every hour of the sunless ages.

That delicate civility to women which we call gallantry, what is it but the fringe and tassel of mercy ?

I was pacing to and fro, awaiting a train within a railway station. There were others in the great room, and it was singular none of them had observed it before—a sparrow imprisoned within the sliding window sashes. He had thought he saw a way, but it was a glass wall. He had beaten his wings to tatters, and his fair plumage into rags. The glass was opaque with the stains of his denuded cuticle, and streaked with blood. He may have been in this crystal dungeon for hours, and fighting till he sank into quiet from exhaustion; from

which reviving again to fight as when I first heard him. Could I be denied it, as I sprang to that heavy frame and sent it with a bang to the ceiling, letting the oppressed go free? Does not Christ, the Sent to open prison doors, feel a grander propulsion to liberate unhappy men, who thought they saw a way, but found themselves in dreadful bonds of poverty, or pain, or dishonor, or conscious sin? Suppose the sparrow had piped out to me, in shrill treble, that he wanted no mercy, but justice; that he could conduct his own life; that he scorned to be beholden unto any one. It is an analogue of many human souls, who are whipping their wings to shreds against the impossible, while to God all things are possible, even their setting free.

Christ said, "Before Abraham was, I am." In any other lips that is a solecism. Men say "was," "is," "shall be." But to a Being unto whom all Eternity is as one vast Present, the use of verbal tenses is an accommodation only, for the human ears that are to hear.

Abraham is not so very far away, if the interval be measured by proper chronometers. Yonder sandbar, shifting and transient as compared with the coast line, bridled the sea as it does in our sight, the morning Abraham lay upon the breast of his unknown mother. Run your forefinger along these moss-grown groves of Catskill rocks, in which the sunbeams blush to day. The same sun-tints and shadows played across the same wrinkles in this old face of the mountain, upon the morning they first reddened on the new-born face of Abraham.

The days of our years are three-score years and ten. Place fifty-seven men of such age in line, as one dies at seventy clasping his aged hand in the soft palm of the babe just born his successor. The procession would not reach from the pulpit to the door. Yet the furthest man, in his strength of youth, might bend over the cradle of the infant Abraham. Against this fragment of time place that great Life, which had "a glory with the Father before the world was."

This boastful independence which we men take on, aged thirty—forty! This that is the one obstacle to our reception of the Gospel mercy in Christ! Great God, thou knowest there is not an Hercules among us but can recall some shuddering moment of the past when nothing but mercy saved him—God's mercy; man's mercy; the sea's mercy, aye, for the very elements grew kind just then and let him escape. Moments were when we were like butterflies that, swimming through the windows of the village forge, light down upon the shining anvil, pluming themselves in complaisant security, lifting gossamer wing and seemingly rubbing palms of content: while above is the sledge-hammer, and the argent iron ready to be withdrawn, spattering fire. With a pause and a puff of his breath the forgerman said, "Go, sir! Do not die a fool!" So mercy blew us out of danger, more than once; we fluttering off but half appreciating our peril. Surely goodness and mercy have followed us from Heaven all the days of our lives. Why then not add, "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever?"

It is a severe comment on the condition of the "natural heart" of man, as the Scriptures phrase it, that he should be *commanded* to receive mercy from God. I suppose if we could assure our dull hearts that the mercies were always physical and material immunities, we should scarce wait to be commanded; if the sin against nerve and stomach might not bring sickness, or folly with dynamite and gunpowder might not effect explosion. But when proffered mercy from Heaven means soul-care, deliverance from present and future condemnation, we beggars become choosers and dare decline!

We prate about justice. Who ever saw the article on this earth? There is none perfect and full, this side the Judgment Day. If there were, I would not dare invoke it. Mercy however is free, is common as the air. I dare invoke that without measure.

In this struggling world it seems to me the wise, in conducting life to successful issue, never reject proffered kind words, nor warm hands, nor kisses instead of curses. They take all favors, which are such in deed and in truth,

and are thankful. Therefore they take Christ, God's greatest mercy.

Is it all of this to be a Christian? Such watchings, such care? Aye, it is this, and more. It is by watching, by care, by study, by prayer, by warfare, by hands of friends and arms of angels, by cross-bearing and by being born on spirit wings—by these to be as pilgrims who have long been walking in the night season. Now no one knows the exact hour, only it must at length be near the morning, so long has been the night. Yes, birds are singing, flowers perfuming, mists rising. Soon the cry is, "Lo! He cometh!"

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Not till then ends this strife for eternal life.

The habitual secularity which comes on many Christian believers, so that to meet in the church vestibule is only to speak of worldly things and never of Jesus; to meet in quiet moments of trade is never, like two fellow pilgrims bound

for Canaan, to talk over their hopes by the way; to meet in social life is to range the world for every topic of conversation but the one thing, which, from hearts a-burning with the love of Christ, it would seem must some time get voice. Think you this reveals great wealth of spiritual experiences?

A good man dies suddenly. The world exclaims, "How unexpected! We bought and sold together Saturday. What did he leave?" A brother disciple here appears and narrates, in the stricken widow's ears, how he walked up from the office with the departed but a week ago, when health was tingling in his every vein. "We fell to speaking of the coming Sabbath, and he opened his heart to me all the way along, telling of such strong confidence in the God of his salvation." It was the last express word of testimony any mortal ever heard from him. It was better than "dying testimony," because undisturbed by the fever of fear, and natural. Write it all down, poor woman. The words are throbbing yet, as bells do long after they be struck.

Another dies; and—and no one can recall

any oral testimony from him for a year past. That last year he was very inactive and lukewarm in the church.

In extremely "high" life, that life the apostle deprecated when he warned us to "mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate," how little do men and women know hearts. Courtesy, etiquette, and innumerable conventionalities keep each from really knowing the other. Two "great men," as the phrase goes, know each other as Alpine peaks, each gazing at the other in his brilliancy and cold, distant splendor. Down in the valley the clovers and other gentle grasses interlace in sweet embrace, and blossom in a confusion of loving kindness that leaves each stock in willing doubt which flower is his own. It is among the common people mostly that one feels heart beat against heart, and is in sympathy with human life in its reality.

Say that no doctrine is true that does not tend to "the glory of God," and your test is

perfect in theory but fallible in practice. "The glory of God" is too often but a glittering generality, difficult to ascertain with speculative truths. We see truth in half lights. A man may reject the doctrine of a Personal Devil because he forsooth thinks it dishonoring to the Divine Government. If he saw the whole bearings of the truth he might conclude it was to the highest glory of God. Of the practical tendencies of truth in human lives, on the contrary there is very little ground for uncertainty. The glory of God unmistakably is virtuous and spiritual human lives. Any doctrine therefore which legitimately makes men feel secure in sin, or tempts them to laxity of morals is not of God, is not true. The sale of indulgences crumbles under this test, and likewise the assertion that "The end justifies the means." Many of the ephemeral isms of our day have been found rotten under this test. Mormonism will not endure it, nor "Spiritualism," nor Communism. The upright citizen carries this test in his hand. He is constantly pronouncing of the "spirits" he "tries"—"I do not want such and such stuff taught my children or employees. It tempts

them to immorality, and stupefies their sense of moral responsibility."

We are creatures of times and seasons. We have our apt hours. To-day closes the most gorgeous month of the year. Two months ago many of us came back from vacation wanderings and began the school, the busy round of domestic duties, opened office and desk with great surplus vigor. Rest cloyed; it seemed we should never want more. We sprang at our tasks, and flattered ourselves we were as good as new,—as youth once more. To-day not a few begin to realize that old pain again, companion of years. Ah, I am not such a giant after all; that old confusion of the head. Hold. I was mistaken. I shall never be elastic like my youth again. I forswear the dream.

Well now, stopping a moment this October day, breathing heavily, is it not an apt hour in which to think on the rest that remaineth to the people of God? To such blissful consideration I invite you this morning.

Envy is covetousness gone to seed. When we can not hope to possess ourselves of another's good, yet refuse to correct the longing and the vain contemplation, at times a feeling of malignity supervenes. We would deprive others of their advantage. The vagabond accosts the horseman,

"Take me up. I'm footsore."

"But the beast can not carry two."

"Then I'll drag you down. Misery craves company."

"Nay, but if you do I'll shoot the beast I ride."

"Very well, do so. I'd rather the beast were dead than that you should be mounted and I on foot."

In politics it is not the Communist alone, but the highly respectable aspirant who disappointed, exclaims, "Then I'll break—everything!" On 'Change the man worsted cries, "Then I'll scuttle the ship, and sink the corporation."

In affairs of the heart the fruit is tragedy, and thus another seed, which we call jealousy, from the sear pod of covetousness. It is a

plant, take it all in all, that is well cut down when it first sprouts in the tender soil of a young heart.

Who so poor that he has not one best friend who prays for him? That friend, the one boy of the juvenile school who, alone of the many now scattered world-wide, your heart cherishes; with whom you keep up correspondence; who always crosses your threshold when in town, and the way to whose gate you always find; who has come to your help in more than one stress of weather; who is without cant, yet a Christ-follower if such there be on the earth.

Is it nothing to you, that with your picture above his office desk, to glance whereat each morning is to pray that you may yet be saved? Nothing, that his children kneeling nightly beneath the pictures of your children on his home walls are taught to ask for you the mercy of Christ? Nothing, his many letters of such burning exhortation to embrace a faith which theoretically you accept as heartily as he; till in these days at length he fears to offend by say-

ing more than, "God bless you;" words you know full well to be big with widest meaning? Nothing, that last well-remembered clasp about your shoulders of his arm that slipped gradually upward till it was almost about your neck as erst when you were boys, and his fervid exclamation, "Old fellow, I'm still praying for you! Let me say it, I hope yet to see you at the feet of Jesus!" Are you still unpersuaded, remembering, as I speak, this good man's late coming to the office, the first visit after your bereavement, when, standing between you and the dingy windows, he spake as no minister could speak to you, pointing you upward, till past the blank walls and through the gloom of nightfall you saw a star of hope shine out, and aspirant longings for the great Immortal for the moment held you in sweet thrall? They who sorrow for us that we are not saved drink the cup Christ drank, are baptized with His baptism. For our sakes they are killed all the day long.

To be alone in prayer, is to be with God.
Yet not alone with God, for all the heavens

are full of so great a cloud of witnesses! Nor is this all; the very air seems full, within that chamber of so-called secret prayer, of clustered forms and faces from out Memory-land, old sins, old hopes, old joys and sorrows, old friends and blessed mentors crowd about, above, and peer out on us; till it doth seem the little room can not contain so vast a company. What use to shut the windows, in cowardly search for solitude, since here are messengers to carry the tidings that I pray, as far as I am known. A praying man will have it writ upon his forehead that he prays. His speech bewrayeth him. God is pledged that it shall be known openly.

Thanksgivings for the windows that open towards Jerusalem, above the roofs of Babylon, the city of our exile. Over in the city of your Monday toil your office desk is by a window. A street runs at your side, which overlooking you see other windows. Within a man is sitting at his desk. You see him daily for a year, or even many years; see him enter mornings, remove his outer garments, hang them behind

his chair, try his pen, work on. But you can not speak together. The windows do not open. You observe at times the pantomime of laughter and conversation, and wonder what can have been said to so amuse him. You note him one day careworn; at intervals you miss him altogether; then returning bearing sometimes sadness—was the child dead?—sometimes gladness—was the child wed? Where dwelleth he? You can not say. How fares he? Like you: for you to him are just such another mystery, behind the closed windows. At length he will go out and never return, or it may be you departing first, and another Human Secret will take the place behind the impenetrable casement windows.

So sits the soul within, behind the closed windows of the human countenance. You think you know me. You do not: nor I you. I do declare with gratitude that I have been blessed with as good friends as ever mortal man. They tread about me sandalled as the angels of brightness. And yet, for the deepest needs of my poor soul, I have no voice to penetrate the glazing which sight may pierce but words can not.

When could I ever speak to them all the longings of my secret self?

But between us and our Christ the windows are wide open. In secret prayer it is permitted unto each of us to commune, soul with Soul, to speak and be understood, to tell the whole long story of our life, in need, in guilt, in love, and fond desire. If we will, we may sit the live-long day of life, conscious that each moment He is gazing down, within easy reach of faintest whisper. We may watch the play of Divine joy and sorrow on that Heavenly Face, as He on the face human.

Without intending it in the least, yet a very rich man is in danger of losing out that power of comparison needed to appreciate what human life really is, life as experienced by the mass of humanity. He is never troubled to pay for rent, bread, and clothing. Perhaps he never sees a bill for personal expenses, but all is cared for by his man of affairs. He has pecuniary anxieties to be sure, but they concern interest on million-dollar schemes and the

raising of money in great "blocks." To hear, therefore, of some neighbor who stumbles and botches his career with such simple things as kitchen expenses, fills our prosperous friend with impatience; as if the man was needlessly tangled in trifles. Trifles indeed to the wealthy; but to the vast majority of his kind the serious labor of a life, yes, even to get a living; as much so as his great approaching payments on ventures whose lines network three continents. Hence, if he be not studious and reflective, he escapes out of all brotherhood with man as he is in bulk.

I was once present when a rich man, of undoubted nobility of intent, suffered a poor man, his brother in the church, to pay the amount of nearly a day's wages for a telegram which had just come to him over the rich man's wires. As we went out, the poor man remarked, "Why did he allow me to pay his operator? He is known to be generous. How slight a thing to have relieved me." Ah! Therein lies the secret. To him the sum seemed so trifling that he no more thought of offering it than you of tendering a penny to your pecuniary equal.

If you had needed a hundred dollars now, it would have seemed different to him.

Every good man, prospered, has found that he must descend, putting his ear to the ground-mutterings, if he would understand what is yet going on in this hard world, since he escaped out of it. One must lie close to nature's heart to hear the beatings. This great swarming creature, Humanity, is for the most part troubled about trifles; one shoe and how to get the next; it can not beckon and fetch supplies like tame doves, but adds and subtracts and writhes to make the issue of honesty. He who dreads cold, insular exile, will allow himself often to be borne along with the lowly.

That is not the noblest type of character which weeps with those that weep, spending all its days in going from house to house of sorrow, howsoever helpfully; but in scenes of gladness feels itself out of place and, mistimed, retires. Nor, on the other hand, that butterfly character, howsoever innocent and uncalculating, a delightful companion and unselfish in

our sunshine; but in scenes of our grief simply bewildered, feeling itself useless and best gone. The very noblest type of soul is born of that love which professes "Because I love you, when you are glad I am glad: when you are sad I am sad." Love naturally "rejoices with them that do rejoice, and weeps with them that weep."

A young man of thirty years; bright and strong; they have made him the New York agent of the great New England manufactory. How proud he is leaving the village swains! How proud she is of him, and hence consenting, with brave little heart to his departure and their living apart a good round year, brightened only by fortnightly visits. That year passed, he moves her and the chit to this great town. At first it is enough that they are together once more; what care they for neighbors? for society? for church? having each other. The new house engages her, while he returns nightly to slippered ease and tossing his child; all this at first. Then next, hear him at intervals,

"Mary, you astonish me. How can you be

lonely? This is paradise. Neighbors? You said the lady next door had called. Church? Society?"

"Ah! John; but the last tack is driven; the last picture hung. You are busy the livelong day. I get hungry for a friend."

But he can not fully understand her, though the next day, being the Sabbath, this son of a New England deacon takes his little family a Hudson River excursion; dropping them at his own door by night with further admonitions to be content, and sleep.

Now look again. The child sickens. No one comes but the physician. The mother heart, watching the hot breathings, is sighing for a New England home under the shadow of the church, where, when one sickens, a score of gentle hands lift the latch and mingle prayers. The end has come. The young man looks from out his windows for the first time searching, in that twilight gloom, for a steeple rising over the wilderness of roofs. Why a steeple? Every steeple has a church, and to every church there must be a minister. Yes, the undertaker knows a clergyman. Then the last scene. There are

chairs enough, elegant, inviting chairs; indeed there is no lack of chairs—but friends. Here sits her brother, hastened thitherward from afar; here one salesman from the store; here two business friends, who have an interest trade-wise in the young man's good-will; here the next door neighbor, good soul; here and here? Emptiness. The clergyman is not a pastor with intimate love and sympathy; the undertaker introduces him very formally; when, stepping to the one ray of light, he reads in hackneyed and perfunctory tone—"Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground, for man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward,"—and so forth to the gloomy end.

Not a pastor of us in this great city, but has been called to be an actor in such scenes many times in many a year.

It may be, at length that the young man realizes that he can not well live alone, but needs a church and all its blessed fraternity.

In sharp contrast with all this. I bethink me, within view of this church to-night there lies in a sick man's anguish a faithful member

of our company whose face was here in all yesterdays. And round about him is that lavishment of care that doth besiege his door with hourly inquiry, while this whole great brotherhood, deeply moved, doth wear him as a jewel on its troubled bosom.

Christ was conscious of eternity. We are conscious of little segments of time. By effort of memory you can become conscious of a yesterday. Closing the eyes you bethink you of where and how you spent the evening, the afternoon, the morning. You trace backward till you repossess yourself of time till—you slept, and in dreamless sleep. No. We are not conscious of a day. By effort, not easily, we repossess ourselves of twenty or forty or sixty years, approximately. Events of national history, where we resided, when we were wed, births to us and deaths to us. Some men can retrace and gather up in consciousness the life-thread back to three years of age. This distance reveals only a single striking event probably.

Christ, the I Am, was conscious of Eternity.

Moses? I gave him being. Abraham? Because I am he was. The dim prehistoric men? I girded them. The stars? I trimmed their wicks and touched them with my torch. The nebulous immensity? I am conscious of all this and more. My consciousness runs back, and back—The quiet student, in the silence of his room, becomes bewildered, and springs from his chair to put these thoughts away, lest the brain reel, for who can endure to think out Eternity?

Souls get a religious soreness, which is the "being broken," or bruised, of which Christ speaks when He says, "Whosoever falleth on this stone shall be broken." He adds another effect more terrible, "On whom it falls it shall grind him to powder," by which must be intended something vastly more irremediable. In our boyhood, when behind some protecting hedge we had stolen off the shoe to run with a bare foot, we got what we called in juvenile terminology a "stone-bruise," the books would call it contusion. It is a most serious hurt; yet there is no outward sign of injury. The

cuticle is not even broken, but the whole subjacent tissue becomes a ganglion of pain. One limps with traumatic agony. The limping is a telltale at home. The recovery is slow. One can not sleep, for the pressure of softest bed linen. In soul-life there comes a moment of decision. Instead of accepting Christ as a corner-stone, the hapless unrepentant stumbles against Him in rejection. The soul thereafter never has religious ease. Every new ism is read. One is perpetually arguing with believers, till fireside and office are notorious religious debating clubs. The Scriptures are conned from cover to cover, for proof-texts of the false; yet such familiarity with God's word has no power to heal the old sore. Pious strangers, upon a first introduction, regard the case as most hopeful and request the pastor or deacons to call. Yet it is an old story, "ever learning, never coming to a knowledge of the truth." Sometimes these bruises lead to religious insanity, so that men decline to talk with this monomaniac astride his wild hobby. Sometimes to nodular abnormalities of belief, like tumors, one eventuating a Spiritualist, another a

Pessimist philosopher, another with vagaries so strange that he classes himself with no school.

If these unfortunates reject our Christ and His Gospel, if they are fully content in their superior beliefs, why do they not leave Him and His alone, calmly dismissed to the limbo of myths? Why so constantly concerned about the Gospel faith? Because it is a heart-hurt. A wounded spirit, who can bear it? It is religious soreness. The soul knows, in every pang and twinge of its unrest, the corner-stone that caused the bruise, and must ever go on, through life, repeating His name, "Christ! Christ!" not as the sainted worshipper, but as one who must give account to himself why he is in pain.

That majestic consciousness of life from out which Christ confesses I am Alpha and Omega, who of us can comprehend it? We are conscious of death coming nearer and nearer. He only has immortal life dwelling in Himself. To gaze on Him, is to have such thoughts as sick men entertain when robust friends enter their chamber. ' You are conscious of life Though you

know you are mortal, yet, having no aches to-day, you feel it in your bones that you will see the new year; you are conscious of sweet May, as if its blossoms were not four months away; and of the midsummer, in which you are laying pleasure-plans even now. You are conscious of twenty years hence. I, however, am conscious of death. I am moribund. I am fading. I shall be cold in June. Looking upon you, I long to cling about you, who will live, that I may live. But I should die just the same on your shoulders."

Looking upon Christ, mortal man longs to survive the centuries; and, praying to be taken up into His life-embrace, is sweetly answered with the assurance, "Where I am there ye shall be also. Because I live ye shall live." This consciousness of death is everywhere observable in the lives of men who reject Christ. Their wealth is felt to be evanescent, their pleasures or pursuits of knowledge bounded by a not distant horizon of night. They must eat and drink, for to-morrow they die. They are like tourists in the shortening December days. Haste, drive fast and hard! It is midafter-

noon, and already the sunbeams slip from the valley. Pound your hoofs, oh steeds, for it is twilight now! Hurry! It is getting so dark and cold. The children of light, on the contrary, are everywhere conscious of life. No need of hosts have they. Already they claim the conditions of a high, holy, timeless noon.

God can beset a man so closely, before and behind, that the poor soul experiences as it were an arrest. "He has laid His hand upon me." Such approaches are very startling. They make a break in our habitual living. Life becomes suddenly very new and strange. It is like the hard hand of the bailiff upon gay Lothario in the midst of wine and wassail. How new and strange, Lothario, from the hot chandeliers of pleasure to the lone corridor lamp that swings and twinkles feebly through the fan-light of thy hospital chamber. In one night the long-abused nerves gave way: and it has been a year of forced abstention, of surgeons and crutches. It has been medicine, not wine, by the hour. Do you say Fate? Then have it so. But were

it I, it should be a heavenly Father who had laid a hand of loving arrest upon me, to save.

As I stood in the national mint watching the dropping out of new gold coins, the old simile got new force, as every day of the year now closing seemed from the mills of God to have dropped out to me, each a new creation. Sleep is cousin to death? Yes. My evening fatigue is the wasting disease. My bed is a grave. Every new sun is a resurrection morning. "When I wake I am still with thee." Three hundred and three-score times has the great Father renewed my youth, for waking I am as a boy again. As often has He proclaimed new sunbeams, air, hours and opportunities, as truly as if I had never had them before. Wrong, each new creation I might right myself. And when the day was wasted, the old yesterday gone, soiled, clipped by the coin-clippers, squandered for pleasure, lost in the gutter, smelted and beaten into gewgaws, He has granted new issuance. Take this, and this. It is not even yet too late.

The Omnipotent is dealing with you and holding you daily before the gates of Opportunity. In Trafalgar Square stands a single granite shaft with a man upon its top. It is a stone man, Nelson. It was standing there nine years ago to my knowledge. It will keep its place for centuries, looking down upon the swarming thousands. Further down the thoroughfare are the Horse Guards. In his little sentry box a man, motionless even to the waveless plume above his frowning visage. He was there when I saw London first, and when I returned he had not moved. He might be thought to face the stone man. He is there to-day. It costs something to assure a living man in the sentry box facing outward. The one you saw is not the one I saw, for my guardsman is dead, or has served out his time, and another and another in the red has taken the place. The astonishing thing with you is that the Omnipotent has kept you day by day face to face with Opportunity like the stone Nelson. Through sleeping and eating, through sickness and health, through all the vicissitudes of a changeful human state, each day has seen you standing before Repentance.

You can enter in to-day, as you could a year ago. The church, the prayer-meeting, the cross of Christ, you can embrace to-day as truly as in any day of the year gone. How long will you indulge the habit of rejection, in the face of such creative service exerted in behalf of your indolent impotence?

We each can recall a prodigy, a veritable Admirable Crichton, whom we have known. Parental testimony for it that he smiled in recognition at two months of age; at three months his right hand clasped his elder brother's toy, struggling for possession; at nine months he was on his feet. We remember how his right arm was a sceptre on the playground. He could throw a stone farther than any other lad upon the village green, and with one upstretched hand lift his body till the chin touched the knuckles, and again! and again! He could outrun, outskate, outleap the school. He could endure drenching, but never coughed. Concerning the curriculum, he had but to glance at the page to master the lesson, while we had

as yet but begun to toil; and the bulk of the time was his for mischief. Ask him the midway point of a line. There; measure to verify that his eye was accurate. That was his gift. He had many such "gifts" or intuitions. He swept all the prizes in. He was petted. People came to prognosticate his sure future, foretelling that that young man had but to make his choice and succeed in any thing. "Yes," answered his parents, "we try to be grateful to a kind Providence for such an offspring. Our other children? We want it distinctly understood that we love them all with equal affection. But—" and that *but* was like a knife in the hearts of the other children; till at last they all agreed to lay every thing at the feet of this child of destiny.

Well, what sequel? We have lived to observe this child of gifts the only failure of that household group. His plodding brothers are with us, respectable citizens, while he is stranded, a poor wreck years ago. The Great Preacher said, "Wouldst thou enter into life? Cut off thy right hand, and right foot, and pluck out thy right eye." He surely taught us, consonant

with events as we have marked them, that it is possible for great natural endowments to be a hindrance, an "offence," unless consecrated by the cross; that they necessitated a most rigorous warfare with self; that they might so imperil eternal life that their lack had been advantage.

That the world does not welcome the simple old truths of the Gospel, but hungers for the eccentric and new, is but an added reason why we should press the old upon its attention with redoubled energy. Energy in business affairs is but kindled afresh and hardened by opposition, in the breasts of all successful men. Opposition to the healthy minded should be like the prick of spurs in flanks that knot into the hardness of steel, and recoil for fresh strides, tossing off the sting.

Here and there you will meet a man whose motto is, I can wait. Measure him carefully, for in any department of life he is a tremendous

competitor. Born poor, he began to mutter his motto when other lads rode on horses while he must walk. I can wait. He muttered it again when a readier intellect bore off the valedictory and other school-day honors. This plodder, I can wait. Again when Acres and Croesus inherited their patrimony entering into life; when impecunious impatient claimed wives while he, attic-sheltered must eat a lone crust, pursuing professional rudiments, I can wait. Election after election has passed and he won not, but he will, for he can wait. You will find such a man, at times, standing under storm-clouds black as night, with defeat hanging from the sky at every turn; yet calmly saying, "Wait! If I can only hold me, why every thing mortal passes away in time. This shall pass, but, passing, find me waiting." Such patience, coupled with the consciousness of strength to match, is illustrious.

What, however, to a strong will is but an easy resolution to develop slowly, waiting in its great continence, is not a simple task to many of us Hotspurs. Is there no hope for us? Thank God, we may partake of the Divine Pa-

tience. It is a gift to suppliants. If we are God's dear children, then we may adopt as our motto "I can wait, for my times are in His hands. I am a child of eternities."

A painter, whose quest is art, may have no patience to listen as you tell of Stephenson; but that he has no interest in Raphael or Angelo? One can hardly credit that. If I must ascend Mt. Blanc, I who have as yet never, what fool am I to hesitate over a guide's dress, the comeliness or homeliness of his face, or the timbre of his voice! A sure foot, an eagle eye, and experience are the qualities to be sought; though, possessing these in my guide, I shall not cast him off because he can sing a song to wake the Alpine echoes.

If my quest is the Gospel way of life, it would seem natural to seek the pious scholar, to study the Fathers, and to be quite indifferent to personal presence. Is it not a strange thing that, with individual exceptions, the religious teachers, who, from age or study and experience of grace, have the weightiest things to say are not

the ones at whose feet the multitude of religious students—in other words Sabbath congregations—gather? Of men whose quest is by no means piety, being “worldly minded,” you would expect this; but you are puzzled when finding such relish for “the house that Jack built” or oratorical trick and oddity in those who should hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Judging *a priori* one would sketch the preaching scene;—given a great-hearted apostle, himself rich in grace, with lifted hand to command attention. Then the ready assembly saying, “To us is given to toil; to you to stand aside and think. To us are given few hours away from shop, anvil, or distaff; to you to sit at the Master’s feet with the open scroll. Speak to us as He has spoken to you.” Then with voice clear and strong,—he ought to care for his voice—with facile diction—a studious vigilance will have afforded him that—looking men in the face and not upon a sheet of paper, because uttering forth that which to him is the abundance of his heart; a message which possesses him so that he could not keep silence; a fervor which lifts the chin, kindles the eye, glows upon the

cheek, as upon the face of untaught childhood whenever it narrates; he declares the artless story of Christ anew: the story that tells of pardon, peace, and power to escape from sin.

There are converts to be met with in every church who seem to feel apologetic towards the rest of mankind for having become converted at all; like the one early apple-tree filled with blossoms when others have but leaves, begging pardon of neighboring Russets and Baldwins, with the assurance that as early as may be it will shake down its fragrant petals and resume the prevalent fashion of the laggard orchard; barring that, of course, in a secret self-complacency, it will hold its advantage, growing its fruit hidden behind dull leaves. Converts there are who seem to have regarded the publicity of their baptism as a necessary yet annoying conspicuousness; which now having been attended to, they trust may as soon as possible suffer rasure from the world's recollection, allowing them to re-enter the worldly—not immoral—circles which previously wel-

comed them. They say, "Receive us. You will not find us greatly changed. We shall trouble you with no long sermons. We have, to be sure, stepped apart for a moment to secure such soul assurance as our consciences would suffer us no longer to postpone, though doubtless, in your judgment, men of the world, foolishly solicitous. But, with your permission, what is it to you, if in non-business hours, we assemble in a church? In markets and pleasure halls we shall strive to be still hail-fellows well met."

In the name of the Divine Manhood of Christ Jesus, whose confession worked His death, what craven folly is this! If a soul is ambrosial with heavenly graces of the new life, shall it borrow garlies that it may smell like the groundlings? Shall the giant stoop that he may not overtop dwarfs? To whom must you apologize for following what seems to you the command of the King of kings and Lord of lords?

It would doubtless be very inconvenient if iron were mutable into lead, if steel might change to wood. The constant properties of

matter seem indispensable. There has always been a desire to assert a like permanency in human character; it would be so much more convenient for the rest of us—not speaking of the unhappy wretch himself—if a man known to be of bad character for instance, could be labelled “untrustworthy.” That ends it. Write it against his name in commercial registers, on his forehead in society. Bad to-day, bad to-morrow. No mistakes need be made; no pity, nor tears, nor exhortations need be wasted; find out which way he walks, and walk all upright men another. But are these things so? Paul says, “Put off the old man, with his deeds, and put on the new, renewed in righteousness and true holiness.” Saul of Tarsus, the murderous persecutor, becomes the most imposing figure of brotherly love. The abandoned woman becomes a memorial type of humble piety. The thief on the cross passes into Paradise a fit inhabitant. Stone becomes flesh in the divine metaphor of a changed heart. Nero dead may be labelled; Nero living may not be, for he may yet become a Paul. It is the testimony of the journeying church still, that those hitherto

abiding states of mind underlying and coloring personality, forming what we variously term disposition or character, may suffer change, so that a soul has a new life and a holy.

We must needs use material illustrations of spiritual things with caution. Let your discretion follow me. A new heart, a new life, a new man, a new birth, and self, are the phrases we would study, professing as they do to mirror that great change, the chief boon of the Gospel. In regions of antiquity a traveller stands gazing at an unfallen yet ruin-marked wall. This graceful pillar—save that it is thrown from the perpendicular; noble architrave and capital—though chipped by false bearings; seams through the white blocks, into which rubble and dust have fallen, festering in the moist air and distilling noisome stains beneath. The observer detects the cause, in foundation stones displaced and crumbling. To pull out, to replace decay with strength, renewing at the bottom is at least necessary, and promises to preserve the superstructure in whatever is worthy,

affording also security for whatever must be restored or newly fashioned. There are such fundamental dispositions underlying the self of every man. The charge of depravity does not signify absolute destitution of all graces in the superincumbent character. The natural man may be intellectually cultured, æsthetic, affectionate, and practical, with varying degrees, in sterling deeds. But these all are "thrown," as the architect would say, bearing the marks of ruin. To dream of renewal in the governing principles, by the miraculous grace of God, for Christ's sake, so that Faith, Hope, and Love lie at the base, is not a vain aspiration to the reader of the New Testament.

As I have observed lambs, caught out of the flock that they might receive the distinguishing mark of the owner, often a red cross in pigments, fly back again, shaking that flank, twitching the fleece that bore the mark, and seeking to lose themselves in the thick of the multitude; so do some Christians uneasily wear the publicity of that hour they came out from

the world before the Church, and, painfully self-conscious that they are known recently to have 'made a profession,' shrink from the cross, willing to hide His name in their foreheads. Still the Good Shepherd patiently suffers them, hoping they will yet follow Him whithersoever He goeth, and become accustomed to the honor of His name in their foreheads.

A correct conception of the divine "goodness" will make the conceiver good. A conception of divine mercy which allows the conceiver himself to be cruel! or of divine gentleness which allows in one's self a hateful tongue, an uncharitable spirit, an utter disregard of a fellow creature's sensibilities! This is not God's goodness. It should be called God's partiality. The wayward, spoiled child attributes such "goodness" to the foolish parent whom he knows "will always decide I am not at fault."

God's goodness is no such mawkish thing. His goodness takes in all men. Therefore it forbids selfishness and injustice on my part, since every other man is as precious to Him

as am I. His goodness then must defend and punish. His Son Jesus Christ is under that protection. His own character and dignity also. He must be good to Himself. I am under that protection; and if I injure myself, I, the sinner against self, must expect protection against myself, and punishment. God's goodness is the universal law, substantiating all rights. Sin is the breaking over and spoliation of some one's rights: His, my fellows, or my own. Therefore goodness must rebuke, restrain, and punish sin.

The duties of religion are duties owed to a Person—not relations with an impersonal law. Men too often forget this. A farmer fences off his pasture lands, subdivides with hurdles, and puts the cattle in. The fences and hurdles have no feeling, but are nerveless wood, alive enough to have sap and leaves till made into fences, though now not vital enough to bleed sap nor long keep their shrivelled leaves. Undertake to leap the fence. It does not hurt the farmer nor the fence. You are hurt, being scratched and

torn; so climb back again. The brush springs again into place. Can that be the Divine Government? Behind every law is a Person. Law is the wish of a Person.

We are very apt to care but little what we do with a fence (law) so long as we go unhurt. Here is just my trouble as a preacher. My message is "Thou art a sinner." The ready reply is "Have I robbed any one? against what man in trade, what neighbor, friend or kinsman have I borne false witness? at whose sorrow have I laughed? Tell me, whom have I wronged?" Of men it may be no one. But confess, have there been no sinful thoughts in your heart in all these years? "Of course! That is human." Is not every sinful thought against God's wish? "Ah! It is of God you are speaking. But we never see God. I have wronged no person." You have: He is a Person.

If I stand upon the northern shore of Poccico Lake I am twenty miles from the southern end. A placid sheet of water like a mirror stretches farther than the eye can see. From Indian Rock I heave into that mirror a boulder. The resultant wave runs over to the hotel dock, now

up to Pine Point, five miles away. Being a Sophomore and fresh from Hydrostatics, I know that by displacement and displacement the wave will run on ten miles away, and at length strike the beach at P—— twenty miles away. But no delicate tideometer could test it away there. It amounts to nothing. Men seem to feel that, somehow by one life striking against another, human sin or virtue will eventually beat its little resultant effect at the foot of the Great White Throne, "but it amounts to nothing." True, it amounts to nothing, if that be all. The words the Scripture uses however to describe the effect of human lives on Deity are "Grieved," "Bruised," "Wounded," "Hating" (indignant) "Loving," "Punishing." These are Personal characterizations.

If one would get correct ideas of the relations we bear to God let him think of servant, of debtor, of friend, of child. These are intelligible earthly relations. They are also the terms scattered all through the Scripture description of human duty. When we think of a Divine Person, then not to love is sin; to forget is sin; to doubt, to withhold worship are sins. It is

not necessary to strike a parent to sin against him; to withhold sympathy is to inflict pain and to wrong that parent. It is here that mere attitudes of mind rise into tremendous importance, so that the heart may be said to be right or not right with God.

Three little elfs meet for an afternoon with dolls; good, ordinary dolls; dolls that have seen service to be sure and bear the marks like honorable scars, yet capable of affording a world of pleasure yet to contented minds. A fourth child flits in, engaging little fairy whom you ache to clasp, mincing along. She dandles something rare in doll-dom. Ah! Apple of discord. First they admire, then they covet, then, alas, that such should be under skins so tender, they envy. Proof? The three retreat into a corner by themselves and train their batteries on this mimic matron with the sumptuous plaything. "Red morocco shoes indeed! I would not have it if I could!" Chorus: "Nor we"—In fact they are dying to. "Real lace indeed! Who would ever know it?" Every one of them

knows it better than her prayers. And irrelevant detraction, cumulatively, till one cute cutter with the tongue caps the climax with a thrust that brings the tears; and all fall a-weeping, who began an hour ago with laughing.

Children of a larger growth are vexed by dolls. Why does our faithful family physician, bronzed, bearded stout-heart whom we love and on whom we lean, begin to scowl at the bare mention of a brother healer having crossed our threshold yesterday? Why does the artist flare, instantly, we meet another artist in our walk? What aileth the musician, now that some one else sits at the piano? Can not the preacher forget the doll, now dandled in the conversation, better dressed than the one his good knees have just been tossing? And this writer of books, reviews, and leaders, can he not see us laughing behind our fans at his pounce upon that other quill, bethinking us of the babes we have just soothed to slumber in the nursery above?

As in the August heavens clouds are fashioned into towers and battlements, with march-

ing processions all in white innocence, and gorgeous thrones of pleasure—yet out of reach! Couches of repose rolled out, and curtains of content looped back, all in sight of the toiler on the dusty plain—yet out of reach! As vaults of cloud-born gold tumble out their massy wealth, before the eyes of plodding penury; and faces of the lost, and radiant forms seem standing upon the cloudy plain—yet out of reach and out of hearing too! As ponderous bars of light seem drawn to make a cloud rift before the western windows of grim Sing Sing, as if may be there stand the everlasting doors which are about to be lifted up—yet upon looking again a prison wall and only the confines of a felon's cell! So over youth and age, sin-bound and fettered to the clod, rise visions of what we would be, could we. The dream of virtue seems real enough; to be sure we are awake if ever when we cry, "I would do good." But the next breath must lament, "Evil is then present with me." The cloudland is not more inaccessible. There is not a virtue but the vilest has some time seen, and loved and grasped at it—out of reach! O God! Must

we ever fail? What means then the promise, "Blessed are they who *hunger* and *thirst* after righteousness, for they shall be *filled*?"

There are two kinds of decay, as I have observed in the North Woods. A tree in a marsh falls, wind-stricken, and stretching out its weary length, consumes through and through. Moss grows on it like wool. Fungus springs out of it, breathing miasms. You step upon it the better to cast a line, and a boot-heel cleaves it to the core, rolling out a bed of yellow mould on which you sprawl. There is moral decay like this. Some men are clean gone to ruin. They are depraved through and through. Their presence breeds fevers. Whoso puts a trust in them, will split their bad shells open with the pressure the temptation brings to bear.

But upon the sandy pasture knolls I have seen the tall monarch, Rock-maple, dead, of one scarce knows what, bleached into decay. The leaves are not, yet every branch and twig is there. The bark is long peeled off, the stalk standing white and polished unto glistening in

the torrid glare of summer's noon. Rains and hail, and south winds have made this ruin hard as iron. Cattle rub against its burnished sides, till the lifeless boughs chatter like rattling teeth in a fleshless jaw-bone. You could break an axe-edge on its flint. It will fall with the century. It is dead—and not buried.

There be men whose souls are dead within them. Their moral sense is utterly decayed. They have discovered a meaning of "depravity" far different from the other class. Yet how elegant they are! How polished, graceful, educated, rich! They wear becoming faces at funeral scenes—yet the thought of immortality is but to them as idle tales. Their very oaths, in club-rooms, are spoken with a sort of grace. They do not enjoy life. They do not hate life. They pray not. They fear not. They have no sap of tears. They tempt the lightning stroke. It will come.

When souls come to the desperate extremity in wrong-doing they seek to be unknown, to be lost in a crowd. The Magdalene had a false

name: her last act before suicide tearing out of a handkerchief, the one article with her real name, the inscribed corner. I suppose there are thousands of unwatched men and women in our great city. Neighbors know them not. Tradesmen are paid cash, no names appear. The postman is never welcomed, or with a fictitious name. But no one is able to escape recognition. Given time enough and a hand will clap the lost man on the shoulder in Broadway with "Charley!" and those shoulders will quiver like aspens.

How absurd—that man can hide himself. Nature denies it. If he walks in the sand, she says, "Here's where he stepped." In snows, "Here I marked it." In dewy meadows, "Here's his track, with the dew knocked off." If one plunge into forests, plucking wild fruit, "Here," says Nature, "I checked off his debt with the white stub of the berry." In the lone room of a great city, who has not felt it? the confined air is populous with faces, faces of the dead, and vocal with voices, voices of duty; till one rushes forth to meet living men—who may detect him. "I can not escape myself—and God!"

Why not then be sweetly found of Him who cometh to seek and to *save* the lost sheep of the house of Israel?

That lone man upon a mast, in the middle of the ocean; five hundred were with him yesterday upon the ship, and now only two; another night and only one; a high hot noon, and only a hound hugs the wretched raft with him; another night, and alone! Sea-mews have deserted the chase, so far he drifts to sea.

I suppose one thinks then "London has millions. Broadway, at the corner of Fulton Street is crowded. I have stood there with these feet. That same Dipper, in the North Heavens, I have looked on from my door. It looks in at my door now. I am dying alone." Think of it, ye who hear; for the fairest voyage may end so with you to-morrow. Within call of that cracked voice are millions on millions of living beings, and a Being. "Seeing then we are compassed about by so great a cloud of witnesses," where shall man despair?

Stephen saw Heaven open. The opening Hea-

vens! The word fascinates. Those impenetrable curtains, through which spirits come and go, looped back! Jacob saw the doors flung wide; the shepherds too, at Bethlehem; and the throng on Jordan's bank. The five hundred saw it when Christ went up. In every case on record, Heaven opened on man's sight has shown *all Heaven on the watch!* It has been a crisis in the life of nations, or of man. Stephen saw Christ risen to His feet, "standing" beside the throne.

There are two ways out of trouble. The way up, by means of which you live above it in the realm of duty. The way down, by means of which you live below it in the realm of "I-don't-care." The saint takes one. The drunkard takes the other. The martyr takes one, persuaded that God is able to keep that committed to His hands. The vagabond takes the other, knowing that he has nothing to lose; he has abandoned his baggage of virtues and treasures.

A group of firemen sat in their engine house to feast their anniversary. They have invited in the "veterans." They eat—they remember. Which is the keenest delight, the memory of the terrible eight and forty hours in which you played the hero, carrying the nozzle through the door-way from which a hundred citizens had shrunk dismayed, or the present banquet? The pleasure of heroic deeds, or—a piece of pie?

Yet here is all the difference between noble and ignoble men. When we come to think of it, self-sacrifice has its own high reward. But observe how slow we are to win it with the denial of an appetite. The cross of Christ is no esoteric secret. It inheres in the constitution of things; even the commonest things.

I have seen from a sultry hill-top in Indian summer time, two opposing winds meet on the plain below; the sickly, enervating south wind and the healthy, brisk north wind bringing new life upon its wings. They grapple. They swing round and round in spiral wrath, tearing corn-stalk, and early fallen leaves, and lift-

ing dust in clouds. Twisting back and forth across the arena, my hopes are all with the cool north, bringing change of weather and clear skies; I am eager to help. But who could help the winds, except to hope and pray? At length my side conquers, pushing over the foe, catching it up and away, and I am glad.

You and I have been spectators of a conflict between two natures within our own breasts. Our sympathies have all been with the good nature. Spirit of God, blowing where thou listest, prevail thou! I rejoice to know this better part dwells in me. It is an ally of my own better part. This debate, this opposing war is shocking. Then the good prevails indeed, and the soul is safe. Strange that I should be an on-looker, powerless but to pray, yet such is the seeming at times.

A speculator buys a barren tract of land, thinking he foresees a fortune, and holds and holds it for a rise; but the city grows another way. He turns it into a vegetable garden, fighting its sterility and weeds courageously; but the cold,

rocky soil is utterly perverse. Discouraged, he is ready to abandon it. Why should one battle thus with nature, when there is no mercantile value in the conquest?

There be men whose idea of moral character is equally mercenary. So much of self-subjugation and correction, of sin-cure and habit-cure as will be of profit in the society markets where they seek to pass—this, and no more. The weary struggle for such inward or exalted virtues as the marketmen and marketwomen will not buy? Let the weeds grow, rather.

A New England lad was this other. Fortune made in Sandwich Islands, there is nothing in this world he has looked forward to with such love and longing, as the purchase of that rough old Vermont farm, where he was born, and his father died. Himself an old man, it is his at length. There were seven of them, but all are scattered, penniless or dead, but him. With his staff he plods among the workmen grubbing out the orchard knoll with its six graves of soiled and sunken marbles. Love never loses patience. He works the scanty soil painfully, spreading it above the rocks,

which prick the farm's hide like starvation bones. He extirpates, stalk by stalk, the bull's eye and the thistle, and makes gray ledges smile with yellow grain. Penurious neighbors stand astonished at the gangs of help, the lavishment of outgo. "He will never get his money back!"

But the fond old soul laughs within his own breast. "Money back? I guess not. I've got the home back."

And when the old twigs and vines have again been trained above the door; when the boxwood of a departed sister's planting has been once more made border the path to the gate; when fond love has forced great wealth to conquer time's decay as near as may be in this changeful world, then he sits upon the threshold looking out upon the noble hills with—

"Father, mother, brother, sister! Oh that my own folk could come back, and move in." And but for this, he is content.

There be men to whom the soul, purchased by the death of Calvary, is so dear, that to see it all-submissive at that Master's feet is its own exceeding great reward. The love of Christ

constrains them, not the market-price. To get again the innocence of childhood, by that grace that maketh "as a little child"; to realize the manhood of a boy's pure dreams; to possess the peace dreamed of in holiest hours of later sin-vexed years; to know that God knows one's nature conquered by His love, even in every secret part—this is the prize of their declining years, the outside world being ignorant of their surpassing inward beauty and content.

Argue with the backslider? Why he knows the whole argument by heart, from firstly to tenthly. Nothing will touch him but passion—a passion of love for that deserted Master, whose death on the cross is called a passion, surging in again upon this abandoned soul.

There has wandered the streets of New York for months a homeless vagabond. He was a soldier of the last war. He was heroic. He was with Sheridan, that day at Winchester. He has scars. He came home after peace, to find his place forfeited, and nothing to do for bread. He wasted his hard hire soon, and

roved a drunkard, outcast. Who has not "argued" with him? Old friends; such kindred as could track him; comrades of that Grand Army Post which claimed but could not reclaim him. "Boys, it's no use. I have no resolution left!"

Yesterday Sheridan headed the holiday parade, and we with all the town looked on. The vagabond looked on, looked on Broadway full from curb to curb, with bands and banners. Does he see aright? His old leader! A thousand memories swell the passion of his soul. There is a halt, but if there were not it would have been the same. With one wild bound he is past all barriers, and grasping stirrup—"General! I was with you *that* day. Oh, those were days when I was indeed a man. It's a wretched fall among the swine! Great Heavens, if I could only go with you now and ever! May I?" One's hero ever has such power to charm, to awaken.

It may be a hymn, sung to the praise of Jesus; a dying friend's last praise to Jesus; a word from the Book, which will not down but gets a ringing in the soul to the praise of Jesus. "Friend of publicans and sinners. Friend of

publicans and sinners." Somewhere the lukewarm soul sees again what argument could not make him see, and cries—

"My old Master! Take me back again!"

It is night now, and quite probably the season of the moon. It is not the dead of night, for Nicodemus would hardly break in upon a stranger's sleep. But the streets are growing quiet after pilgrims and holiday loiterers. Jerusalem is an orderly, a religious city; at any rate he hesitates not to walk alone, and passes almost unperceived. He had called may be, one of those Galilean peasants to his side in the crowds of the Temple that day, asking, "Where does your master Jesus lodge?" If so he had received a courteous and truthful answer.

Conning the direction, with some sober vestment donned above the glittering robes with which he had been present at the evening sacrifice, Nicodemus turns his back upon the Temple marbles, gold in the rising moonbeams, passes under the dark of Antonio's cas-

tle, threads the narrower, humbler ways at length, seeking the Man of Sorrows. His feet are unused to these rough quarters; and pausing at intervals, the white beard lifted inquiringly for some guidance of a street name—"Had I not done better to have forgotten this peasant? Yet Isaiah was peasant too. I might better, may be, have asked him to my house—but to be called myself a Galilean—or bespoke him lecturing in the city squares—No—I'll return—no—on. If the man has truth, do I not want truth?"

What was it he saw now? The black and frowning shape of that old prison, from whose Heaven-forced gates angels lead brave Peter out some good years later on, and within easy walk of which were Christian homes though humble? Was it Mark's mother's door that opened now to this old ruler of the Jews; and all the roomful round the feet of Jesus took the Speaker's hint to rise and greet a "master" come to them? Did the saddened great man wave impatiently aside the deference of the simple family, requesting secrecy and silence that the two might talk? The obeisant circle, speechless all.

The great Ruler in the dignity of years; the simple Jesus in brown locks of thirty. The Old in the splendid undress of his order half revealed; the Young in the graceful product of the home loom and pilgrim girt. The Old full-fed by a lucrative office and a life of luxury: the Young in the manly strength of the hill country. The Old cold, a Stoic, who had kept the law from youth, clean as an ice blink, accustomed to reverence from all, himself called "Master"; yet abashed now, and heavy-hearted, breaking silence with—

"*Master*, we know that thou art a teacher come from God."

The Young man, calm and gentle as the Fatherhood of God, "Ye must be born again."

They who witnessed that scene will never forget it. We who hear of it should not forget or mistake its lesson. We must be born again.

There are some men so grand that they possess their prosperity—not their prosperity possesses them. It is the man with a gold ring on: not the gold ring with a man on.

The morality of the Gospel rests on higher sanctions than that of the Old Testament.

First. Gratitude to the good God.

Second. Veneration and love for the Personal Teacher and Saviour.

Third. Our brother-man is purchased with the same sacrificial blood.

Fourth. We are the temples for the indwelling Spirit of Christ.

Fifth. We desire to be made meet for the inheritance of the saints in Immortality.

In mathematics, twice two are four, "and that's the end on't"; but in matters of opinion men will admit, for instance, that truth should prevail, yet dispute endlessly as to what is truth. Sometimes, amid the confusion of debate over what religion is, what the soul's safety is, I turn eagerly to the Bible. But men are disputing as to what the Bible means to teach. Then, desperately I exclaim, "Let me sit at the feet of Jesus, taking a plain man's view of what He says! On that will I rest." If He were walking this street to-day, meeting men as once

He met them, I would hear Him; as He met the decent man; the stingy man; the outcast; the sceptic; and mark His manner of address. How would I delight to sit beside him in a pew, as He listened to one of His modern preachers; then question Him, "What was truth in the preacher's words?" I would go with Him to Sing Sing, and observe His methods with such men. I would say, "Come with me, my Lord, talk with my friend a metaphysician. My other friends, the moral man and his good wife. I can not move them. Oh! to observe thy manner with such souls."

In His recorded career the close student can find every modern character met by Christ and instructed. In these cures of sick souls is there a common base line of operations? If you look in at a watch-maker's window you find the repairer doing a different thing to almost every watch. One wants a new mainspring, but otherwise is in good order; another has no fault with the mainspring, but wants new jewels. Another has neither of these faults, but a bro-

ken crystal. At least we may say there is no one fault which in every watch demands repairing. The souls of men which Christ repaired; are they like the watches, each righted in different ways, and only casually presenting the same defect? Is Zaccheus repaired as to avarice, and otherwise not touched; Paul as to intense bigotry, a very different fault you see; the outcast as to chastity; Nicodemus as to his opinions, but otherwise not, and not needing? Is Christ's salvation patchwork? Or is there in every soul which the Restorer set right, one and the same radical fault, treated in reality in the same way, though with different outward methods of approach? To every man He said, "Repent." It is the common base line of cure. It is as if the mainspring was broken in us all.

Speaking of repentance:—Christ began His ministry with that word, preaching it. Think what it is, to preach "Repent" to a promiscuous audience. Are there none who need not the message? You are a physician, and before you stand three men. You preach a cure to

them, feeling no man's pulse, nor taking other diagnosis.

"Diet, gentlemen. Be careful of your food, that's the cure."

"But, doctor," objects the first man, "that applies to the next man for he has gout; I, however, have a broken leg, and the third man a cataract on the eye."

Multiply the three men by one hundred. It is the city hospital. How absurd this curing at arm's length, standing at one end of the ward, with one word. Not a specific hospital, not if all its sufferers had trouble of the eye, could be so treated. Yet Christ stood and preached to hundreds of sick souls, and sent His ministers to do likewise, with one word "Repent." Every man needs then to repent, it is the beginning of the cure, if the Physician is to be believed.

"A Scotch mist" is the infidelity of to-day, only a Scotch mist. Do you sometimes tremble? You must have observed that every winter we have "the coldest day within the recollection of the oldest inhabitant." But just as

we are concluding that the summer will never be possible again, so low has the sun sunk, so bitter the cold, so rocky the frozen earth, so stout the assertion of the afore-mentioned oldest inhabitant consulting her memory and croaking over the top of her trembling staff—some sober man turns to the records which stand in ink. Lo! Last winter had five colder days; the winter before seven, and—but why look farther? Present troubles are always the worst.

The days of Voltaire were very dark. Hume, Gibbon, and Rosseau thought to put out the sun. He is yet shining. What a dark day was that which succeeded the Peace of Westphalia? But God raised up Jacob Spener.

Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, and Thomas Cooper in early American History thought Christianity was moribund. Two years of revival in 1801 burned out their coarse scepticism, till the very ashes stank.

What did Robert Owen effect? "Hopedale," "The Brook Farm," "The New Moral Order," "Fourierism," are all gone, but the Son is yet triumphant.

The sceptical element in Phrenology, Spir-

itualism, Hosea Ballou's Universalism, Parker's Unitarianism—these have passed, but the Son still reigns.

I have stood in May, and studied the leaf-buds. Putting forth somewhat, there has suddenly come a chill in the spring air. I have then heard the buds talking with each other,

“Ah! There will be no summer more. Let's shrivel up, freeze, die, and drop off.”

“Nay,” respond others. “Wait. Cling close to the bough from whence is sap and nourishment. To-morrow is June.”

“Not so think we. We shrivel up, we fall.”

And these foolish ones lie all along the ground sere and crisp. Man and beast grind them to powder, while June breezes scatter them afar. The faithful buds are now touched into fulness. New buds take the place of the weak departed. The forests are green afar with the uncountable leaves whose faith failed not. I am so sorry for the discouraged few, who froze in one day, and strew the sun-flecked ground. It is not the word of a speaker who feels advantaged. Of a

truth, in my heart I am pained—and it is nigh the only regret over scepticism I feel—for the souls that shall be frozen to the death, in one passing day of infidelity. For the summer is sure, shimmering with advanced rays already warming us. To-morrow millions shall be “converted” in the old, old way. Christ shall reign. Read History.

Now and then men face the alternative and boldly assert, “There is no difference. Every man is what circumstances make him.” Ask one question: Do you act on that belief? For if you do, I’ll expose you to-morrow; an unfit man for a bank president, an unsafe man for a clerk. You have no place out of prison walls. Who knows what “circumstances” will excuse for you even murderous intents to-morrow?

Have you, a Christian, two sources of happiness, God and The World? Then you are wrong, for to you God ought to be in all the world that you appropriate, and all the world

God's. Do you use the adjectives "spiritual" and "secular" in describing your enjoyments? Is prayer spiritual, that is the Great Spirit's gift, while an evening in a picture-gallery is secular, that is man's gift? Why, God gives the latter as truly as the former. If you are living on the high plane of your privilege, you see God in all things that you are permitted to build into your life. Have you spiritual needs, as for instance help in resisting temptation, and secular needs, such as help in sickness? There is only One Helper everywhere. You watch against temptation—and pray; you call the physician in sickness—and ought also to pray. Are you able to manage the mortgage alone, but unable, as you think, to save your soul? In fact you, without God, are as powerless in the one case as the other; you can not cross your office threshold without Him, nor sign a draft. There are not two worlds here below to the Christian, one God's realm and the other man's. He is all in all. Colloquially it is harmless, but in the secret heart it is wicked to distinguish to one's self between spiritual and temporal possessions. Your faith

and love are God's, and so your house, your gold. Men say business is business and religion is religion. No. Business is religion and religion is business.

How childish we are! How difficult is it to condemn self, even in the smallest thing. Thousands of the people this week poured through the museum, and looked into the glazed cases and counters. Saturday afternoon five people stood over one particular case, when—crash! went the glass. Instantly every one of the five was erect with, “It was not I,” “Nor I,” “Nor I.” Did she, whose heavily jewelled arms craunched upon the articles *de vertu*, under whose pressure the shivering really was,—did she, worth a fortune of a million, pause at the office and offer to pay one little dollar? Not so; but going out with the crowd she spends costly hours to dissuade her accusing conscience. She is much obliged to any member of the family who suggests,

“It was the way the attendant had closed the case.”

“Yes. That was it.”

"It was the crowd of weeks who had cracked it."

"Yes, yes. That was it."

And yet, absenting herself a year, as she revisits the museum she mentally asks,

"I wonder if they know that I am the person who—did *not* break that glass?"

Is the illustration cheap? I'm glad you think so, for then it fits the sin it depicts; the cheap, small, childish sin which everywhere, and in greater things the same, prevents the brave words—

"It is my own fault."

There never was a human biography written, that did not lie like—well like a human photograph.

As I speak of this "newness of life," I am not unmindful of your mental questionings—"Do facts, observed in the lives of church-members, bear you out? Are all who are in the visible church—" Hold; we, their fellow-men, admit

men into the visible church. Can we infallibly ascertain who is truly "born again"? Not so. The facts do bear me out that whosoever is truly born of the Spirit, whoso is of the invisible Church of Christ, is a new creature, let whosoever watch and criticise him. Moreover; if I mistake not, I have seen not a few lives, glowing with a beauty, not self-wrought, but Spirit-wrought, whom timidity or stones of minor doctrinal stumbling have kept from presenting themselves to the church on earth. I say here, to-night, you belong to us. We are expecting you. You are of Christ. Come now.

Your old college chum recently spent the night with you; saw your residence, your wife, and your children, who showed off in the usual way of children before company. Next day at home, he narrated, "A good fellow is Tom; successful; plain wife, most uninteresting children, not at all like—" and with that he gathers up the thin form of his own, always sickly, but his *own*, whose thigh is not as thick as the thumb of your own stalwart roisterer. But with the

lamp of love that father has gone searching through and through the little disadvantaged life of his pet, valuing every possibility, and seeing great things. Thank God! Every day some one says, "Pastor, there is that boy of mine. If he is only pointed right, he has great things before him." True. Only, if we would be Christ-like we shall see the same in every boy. A wonderful discerner is the lamp of Christian love.

Every little while we make the worn-out toys and picture books of the nursery seem new. We hide them for awhile; then reproducing them, they are invested with twofold interest—memory and possession. Does not God sometimes so deal with the blessings we have come to lightly value from their very commonness? Ask Him for the old blessing to-day, if you are now, bitterly taught, able to appreciate it. Perhaps it is time to give it you again.

I saw yesterday the new "harp attachment" upon a music box. Down upon the steel comb was pressed a long bar of like metal. And the command was given to the poor thing, "Now be a harp." The unwilling teeth choked and strangled and half-swallowed their natural tones in a possible effort at imitation; but so soon as the bar of constraint was lifted, nature had her own again in a jingling, rollicking run from *Robert le Diable*. "Ha! ha! I am not a harp!" Many men are trying to utter the harp-tones of the Christian character by pressing an iron resolution upon the faculties of the natural heart. The New Testament is the score. But to love God with all the heart, and one's neighbor as one's self, to prefer first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all those lofty, spiritual duties and activities of Paul's or Peter's or Christ's commands,—these are out of reach. Lift off the will, and nature has her own way again. You get harp-music from harp-strings. The changed nature is a miracle.

There are two blessings which I, a young man, crave at the hands of Age. That I may respect the elderly life;—it is by nature my teacher, both in example and precept. That I may love the elderly man, because he is lovable. What purity of affection is there in the tribute of trusting youth to lovely old age! It is so free from admixture of passion; not gross, but spiritual. It is possible too, when Age is not simply one sixty-years growth of will-power, nor but an aggregation of strong doctrinal convictions; not a saddened ripening of one text, “Vanity of vanities! all is vanity!” nor a pathetic ruin of the mind’s cheer under ruin of wealth or fortunes; not simply a soured determination to “hold out to the end to get the crown.” Rather we can love Age when it beams with Christian joy. I see him who has drunk so deep at the Fount of Life that stalwart sons come unto him for cheer, and generously strive who shall possess him most; whose grown daughters toy with his white locks, after the trembling utterance of the evening prayer, and fear the time when from their dwelling such sunlight shall fade. I see him with enwrapped

infancy, telling Joseph-stories, till baby voices cry again, "More, grandpapa! more." I see youth salute him as he passes in the streets. I see, at the wedding, the bride stoop to kiss him last, as she departs, with a whispered request for his holy prayers. I see him in pain testifying that grace is sufficient for him; in prayer-meetings heralding forth "the way grows brighter and brighter." I see him at last, cold and white before the altars of God's house, and the hymn sung seems so truthful that it follows men out into the toilsome world, a sweet echo, "Lived rejoicing every day—every day, rejoicing every day."

Thank God for such men. The fruit of the Spirit is joy.

Have you ever yet come to ask yourself that question of mystery, What is my soul? If not, you will. Oh, mystery! What is this being which I, plain John Blank, am? Is it my hand? No, cut it off and I, with power to think, to love, to hate, still am. Pluck out the eye, and I am still sitting behind the dark-

ened window, thinking of the sunlight once seen. "Vital spark," "heavenly flame," personality, disposition, character, mind or soul? These are verbal guesses at an unreachable reality. This is what must be changed, if I am to be changed. Will water touch it? No. Will knee-bendings, or confirmation robes of white, or hands of fellowship? No. Will new ideas? Man may adopt the clearest ideas of right and wrong while yet a villain. Will outward morality touch this inner something? Not necessarily; for one may be a hypocrite. What will touch and change the spirit of a man? Only the Spirit who first created can recreate a spirit which has, somewhere, lost its pristine spirituality.

God takes no pleasure in our sadness, unless it is over our own or another's sins, or in sympathy with another's sorrow. Sadness of itself is not meritorious, but should be repented of, seeking forgiveness for it. "The will of God in Christ concerning you" is "Rejoice evermore."

The world quarrels with the Scripture demand that we "put on the new man." But every one has had the desire to make some friend of his "over new." We like the fellow *if*—but there are so many ifs that at last we exclaim, "with the exception of his generosity there is scarce a part of him which does not need taking apart and making over, new." Well, I can understand that God must so conclude about the best of us, from His stand-point.

In those days that went before our conversion we felt conscious we had a green spot or two in our nature; here and there a fountain in the arid waste. One said, "My character is not, to be sure, what I wish it was, but I am a generous soul." And, like a frugal gardener, he dipped his watering-pot into that one spring, going forth to spray its poor drops upon the rest of his soul lands, trying to make dearth spots green. Another dipped into his honesty; another into his intellectual pre-eminence. At length there came a kindly wind from God's Spirit over the plains of character. Heaven

opened itself with life from above. Gentle, life-giving rains! Divine influences upon the human soul. With some, indeed, with thunder and lightning and rendings, as with Paul; but with others it was as the more ample dew, softly falling, through days and months maybe. It was a heavenly quickening. We threw away our water-pots and lay like outstretched fields in sunshine and in rain. Every good seed began to take root. Love to God, to man, faith, hope, spiritual desires, and fair flowers of good deeds, planted and nourished by Divine Power, began to put forth and blossom. Thus has come spring-time to the soul. The wheat is not yet ready for the garner, nor the apple ripened; but we are, I trust, growing up into Christ, as into a genial air. Eternity is the summer. There shall be no shortening autumn. The vintage is His, for He gave the increase.

Upon the young the effect of bad company is like the lightning's stroke. Flash! And he is dead, or his eyes are opened. Upon maturer life it is an atmosphere of smoke and fog, like

that which moves across the face of London marbles day after day, charged with sulphurous gases from chimney stacks and retorts of manufactories. It bleaches out the red flush of innocence, tarnishes the blue of faith, and the green of sweet memories. The sneer of your best friend at your faith, only a little sneer, day by day. It rises like bad air, gnawing at your bronzed ideals. I complain in your behalf, Sir Forty-years-old, of your delightful neighbor. He is indeed of high and generous instincts, chivalrous, with ready tears in your time of sorrow. But these are like jewels on the steel that stabs. He is the stronger nature of the two. His polished unbelief, breathed out here and there, under the veranda in June twilights, on Sabbath strolls, around the winter's fire, is blighting you. You are not believing as you once did. He is not good for you. Your pious wife will say the same; your best friends see it. Your conscience pronounces, It is true.

Not a defaulter, not one of the many who of late have proved false in fiduciary stations, but

within his heart there rose up, at the first, the question, "Is not this wrong?" It was the upspringing of conscience, reaching out after a support. The conception of a Holy God would have been a great Yes, into which that upreaching conscience could have fastened itself, and then held the whole man. But it is only too evident that, in every case of falling, an inferior idea of God's holiness was being cherished. God is merciful, knowing that we are all poor sinners; good-natured, caring most of all to make us comfortable, and not much for moral character. He will remember that I must have a living, and that I perpetrate this irregularity from love of my little children. Then came ruin. I have seen a wild vine of the woods which had climbed by some old tree. Half way up, the trunk has just been snapped by the gale. Yet for hours thereafter the vine continues to reach upward its head and tender arms unto the unsupported air, swaying tantalizingly, grasping, feeling for a prop. By the third day it has bent, disheartened, to twine round itself, and even to grow downward.

As you value your soul, be affrighted when

your conscience must reach downward to find its God. Instead of being a little below your best, the true God is always a little above, and yet above, and above; even if you become as the archangels—above.

A true Christian always vindicates God and condemns self. He is on a sick-bed and his weary prayers seem to lie unanswered at the footstool of Christ. He can not understand why he is thus afflicted. He almost speaks it out, "There has been some mistake. God is not what I—" Then, shocked at his thought, he gathers up strength to do a deed of mind more worshipful than all hymns, sermons or stately pageantry of cathedral services, "Let God be true, though every man a liar! He is not false. It is *I!* *I!* or my fellow-man, or we twain. Let it be any thing else, rather than that I should condemn God." This is not saying that we always know just wherein to condemn self. The principle of a true piety, however is, undoubtedly, always to exculpate God and inculpate self.

That is bad company which helps a man to do wrong, helps him down. Is it not a hideous office when you contrast it with the work of a benefactor? The latter is one who helps men up, up from ignorance, up from want, up from vice and sorrow. Think of the man who helps—*helps* is the word—a fellow-man down!

It is done every day. Over here (Brooklyn) is the errand boy's home, and nightly the widowed mother helps him upward; does it on her knees beneath the pictured face of the dead, upon the wall. Over there (New York) sit the gray old rats in the idle back office, retailing lecherous stories to bring a boyish blush. They are helping down. It were better for such, who offend one of these little ones, had they never been born.

Over here is the clerk's home, and you have him one little Sunday-school hour. Over there, in the bank, at the same row of desks are two waxed demons. Those two fellows know every sin, save theft, in the calendar. They badger our clerk. They narrate, Monday mornings, the evil deeds of the Sabbath. They laughingly

show their white fangs, dripping with the carrion of yesterday. They help a man to do wrong. They undo what you do over here. They are whited sepulchres full of dead men's bones. They are of a generation of vipers. How can they escape the damnation of hell?

At the school is one whose touch is pollution. At the college one whose palm sheds a scab as you grasp it: he teaches scepticism. At the boarding-house is one who corrupts: he despises the churches and teaches men so; he dishonors the Sabbath; he champions the guilty; his habits are bad. Do not eat with him, says Paul.

"Help! you passer-by! I have found a little bird that can scarcely fly. Hi! There he goes! Help, can not you climb the tree?"

"But, my friend, I think the birdling will take care of himself. He needs no help."

"Nay. You do not understand. Help to catch him, to drag him down. See, he weakens, he pants. We will break his legs, and then? Then we will"—with smacking lips—"break his wings! tender wings! pretty wings, easy to twist! Break them once and twice.

And we will gloat upon him. Then we'll see him struggle from the dogs."

Is there no hell? Let it be your child whose legs are broken, the wings of whose spirit are thus broken. What monsters there are in this world. To think that my little children must go out of the nest to-morrow!

To receive and love good men, for their goodness' sake; to ponder the narrative of noble deeds—this is one of the most efficient means of soul-culture, and exalted enjoyment. If you are in earnest with your soul-building, you will entertain Abraham, the friend of God; Moses, the great leader; Boaz, the pure man, and Ruth, the virtuous girl; Hannah, the pattern mother, and Samuel, her consecrated son; Daniel, the Puritan, and Elijah of heroic mould.—Of course you invite to your inner hours of meditation John, Paul, and the whole apostolic group. If you find in history any deed nobly done, done to stir the blood and fire the hearts of witnesses; if in the life of Grecian patriot or sage, or Roman soldier, from Thermopylæ to the senate

when Regulus confronted it, you will whip out your pencil and mark the page. As you turn the leaves of modern history, if anywhere you find an action related to kindle the loftier emotions of the soul, like the acquittal of the English bishops, or sung by poets, like Bonivard at Chillon, you will turn down the leaf; you will read it to your children often. When you come from the hard and selfish marts of trade, digusted with your kind, you will revert to these golden deeds, and thus save your ideals. We think, too often, that life is new, and our own peculiar temptation was never met by man before. Not so. Life is old. Are you selfish, earth-loving, doubt-filled? Look to your books and about you. Ten thousand men and women have met your identical trial. Study them; find out how they steered the ship and triumphed over the tempest. Cut from the newspaper every slip which tells of a grand action grandly achieved in this most prosaic decade. Put it among your treasures. Every soul ought to have its own Westminster Abbey, into which, as years pass, the great good are admitted, with statue and tablet; into which is no easy admit-

tance; no, multitudes live and die around you, but only here and there one unto whom you issue the mandate, Let that one be borne in. Not Moses alone; but your young friend who abandoned college, midway, to lift up the beggared home his departed father left. You are not to worship within your sacred walls, for there are but men about you. But you are to sit there, dreaming, rested, thankful, inspired.

I am continually saddened by the sight of so many children of the rich, especially sons, with whom life is inane, and aimless. In many cases the result is early dissipation. Any thing to add zest to life. I see others however, who, like Nathaniel, are dreaming under their fig-tree, too high-minded to be dissolute, yet filled with a nameless dissatisfaction with self. From a lad one has never been obliged to work, in the proper and natural meaning of that term, and by eighteen has already travelled in all lands. Life is old before it has fairly begun. Reared in the best circles of a great city, he has had the *entre* to such pleasurable rounds as have

now quite lost their savor to him. Then college, because—well he loves learning; I have said he was pure-minded—but not a little because college will fill the time to twenty-five. Then *life*. Some are entering politics—only to tire of the career. Some revisit Europe, and at Paris enter society, at Vienna study music, at Rome gaze emptily upon the grand spectacles, at London society again; but all is done aimlessly. Some go into business, the place an affectionate father has prepared, and at first with some energy; but the healthful stimulus of necessity is lacking, and it is a mimicry of usefulness. They are conscious the business was done without them, would be done without them, is done without them. Perhaps, now, marriage for a time supplies its own noble and generous excitement; but even domestic love is robbed of its loftiest joy—the consciousness of strength supporting lovely weakness with its own faithful arm; for he inherits wealth, and so does she.

What shall he do? The aimless life of a rich man's son, who is not a profligate. He is a field of ripening wheat, waiting for a reaper;

but day after day prosperity's sunbeams overhead, those blazing, ripening sunbeams. What wonder if a spark from evil to-morrow inflames him all?

Nathaniel, my brother. I present you MAN. Have you ever thought of the swarming world, in its sin and sorrow? Jesus said to your prototype, "Go feed the poor. Come, follow me." He proposed to make us fishers of men; to send us into all the world preaching to every creature. Have you read this week of — — too soon passed into the heavens, with vast wealth going forth to bind the wounds of our late war, employing one day each week in visiting and praying with the poverty of New York, instant in every season of charity? I do not speak to dullards. You are of fine grain. Does not such a life-object fill your dilating eye? Think on man. Think on the hours all your own. Think on your educated mind. Think on your means. You should be a philanthropist. It is not the ministry of the pulpit I depict to you. First give your own soul to Christ, and then let Him give you to man. There is in such a life always something to do for Jesus,

always something to suffer for Jesus, always something to enjoy from Jesus, always some new beauty to see in Jesus.

The mind thoroughly convinced that God has done a wrong can not stop short of insanity. In childhood it transpired at times that parental authority had made a mistake, was wrong. Childhood stood astonished at the frank avowal, "My boys, I was wrong." At first the sensation was flattering to young vanity; and smiles and simperings marked our victorious exit, unpunished. But after all the sober moments came apace. It was wholly an unpleasant experience. It was a sort of shock, as if the north star had gone out. Father's wrong! It was as if a guide in the woods had halted to say, "I have lost the way." We would rather it had been, *our father infallible*. What would it be, after the first puerile flush of self-vindication, to know in this world of contradictions of fortune, of pains and joys so strangely meted out, man is right for once and the Ruler wrong! We should even then creep back to Him, shivering,

cowering with the animal instinct that must have a Master. But what a horror of apprehension would forever haunt us, serving the fallible.

Will you, seriously, assert your burdens of domestic life to be the Christian cross Christ commands us to take up? However beautiful natural affection, do not the inferior animals share it with you? Besides:—will you, returning from to-morrow's toil soberly apostrophize your dwelling, "Oh! Home! Thou art my cross, all the self-crucifixion I need. The cradle a little cross; the boy's schooling, the beloved sick-bed of my vigils, the arm-chair of my old mother, a continual crucial burden!" Not so: You are not such stuff as that. There may be hours of fatigue and petulance; but, take all in all, these things are indulgences to such a self as yours. To you commercial integrity is no cross. You would scorn to be portrayed after this fashion, "Know all men. You think him the soul of honor; but within are chained tigers of dishonor and fraud." You luxuriate in temperance, in chastity. At least seven out of the

eleven commandments are to you delights. In them is no self-denial.

As you review your life—its burdens, which have been joys; self-restraints, which have been the happiness of self-respect; sorrows, which, however submissively borne, have lacked voluntariness since you did not offer self—has there yet been downright, purposed self-denial, worthy to be called taking up Christ's cross? Your heart is a steeple-ball on which these things have been like pattering raindrops. Oh! for some stroke which shall make your whole nature vibrate with a solemn note "To prayer."

Try to submit your will to God. Or try to put your love of business prosperity under your feet. Do not wrestle with the playthings of boys, such as "Thou shalt not steal." Take this, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Oh! Thou white Atlas, there is thy cross—the world. Roll that away from the heart's door, if thou canst. It is in bending to that, thou provest to thyself, to God, and to the rest of us, that thou too art a poor sinner. God charges upon the rich young man who had "kept all the commandments from

youth up," "Thou wouldst rather be a rich man than to be a good man:—all of a good man conceived of by thyself and commanded by Me."

It was doubtless when standing in full view of the niched rock cut by Greeks for the idol Pan, face to face with the lustrous marble temple to "divine Augustus" of the Romans at Cæsarea Philippi, that Christ said, "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" To Him belonged this costly adoration, squandered at the feet of idols; and He is a jealous God. There before His very eyes were the tokens of a false love. Jealousy in the purest woman's heart, at sight of love-tokens bestowed upon another which were rightfully her own, is a severe, a biting thing, killing the one, or the two, or the three. Observe how poor and inadequate a thing is our English word jealousy, with which to portray the Divine emotion. Our blessed Lord laments over the value of a soul whose devotion is snatched from Himself; loves it all the more; condemns it with the unspeakable condemnation of wounded love; asks,

“Once lost, what shall man give in exchange, to get it back again?” His “jealousy” drives Him to the cross, that He may win His own again—the love of a priceless human soul. Let human jealousy learn a lesson. Lift yourself up on a cross, that you may draw unto yourself the heart you think you have lost.

“It is the nineteenth century.” How few know how to weigh those words. It is election day; and I watch two men approaching the ballot-box. Each carrying a little vote, only a little vote. One is a boor, whose only fitness is that he was born more than one and twenty years ago, on this soil, and that he is human and not equine. How light a thing to him is that little vote, which he would barter for a cart whip with a brass ferule. The man behind him is also of the poor, with coat-sleeves polished to a greasy sheen, edge-ravelled; with thin and yellow face; with straggling locks of gray. He is no taxpayer, and no man regards him. But that man is a garret philosopher, who has pondered the struggles of constitu-

tional history; who knows that the franchise is the costliest blessing of the civic world. His vote is red-colored, picked out of the hoof-prints and cannon-ruts of a world-wide battle-field, where millions of men died in its behalf. He could kiss it, and casts it with a prayer. It is not for us all to be well-read philosophers; but it is possible for us all to catch some inkling of the tremendous expense lavished to pave a way for this nineteenth century. Would to Heaven we were served in high office by men who at least have read the past, even though they can not plan the future!

What is my temporal, earthly life? It is getting from bed of a morning say fifteen thousand times, going to the store, measuring a yard and a yard till noon: it is to eat again, and again measure yards till night. It is to greet the home, to study the inanities of the evening paper, which, if dates were changed, might be shuffled like cards and "the news" fit as well one year as another. It is again to rise in the morning. Quite like a machine, the wheel

goes round, and the wheel goes round. Has God put this earth under me simply that I might stand and measure three feet for the yard? Has He turned and overturned all historic Providence that I might sell my yard and be able to collect the debt? Has God come in the flesh that I might be taught to give thirty-six inches for a yard instead of thirty-five—to teach morality only? Was the cross erected solely that I might be forgiven if once I gave thirty-five inches for thirty-six? These things indeed are not to be despised. Religion makes good citizens, merchants, parents, and children. Every earthly relation is exalted. But as one views Creation, Providence, Bethlehem, and Calvary, who does not catch a hint of something God can see in Eternity, which belongs to us because we are human souls? The Brazilian Indian pours a handful of rough diamonds into the pouch of the first white man who has ever asked for the pebbles. But even the Indian soon learns to value what he sees so eagerly sought by pilgrims from afar, though he can not imagine a Westminster Abbey coronation and its diamond crown.

As I look at my life, bounded by cradle and grave, it is not worth all this seeking on the part of Deity. There must be something else of me. I begin to wonder what it may be to be an immortal. I value my own soul. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know" there is something beyond.

The word Christ means The Anointed, the Anointed king. Who is without his Anointed, his Ideal, his Soul-monarch, or Thought-king? It is pitiful, some of these inward coronations. The grocer's boy with the basket on his arm, out of the dime novel; the lounge, from the boards of the theatre; the brakeman, from the central offices, get each their Anointed before whose mental image they exclaim, "Ah! To be such a man as he!" West Point anoints the great captain of the century, the lean lad from Corsica. Dreaming youth in college halls pour out on Webster, Longfellow, or some strong one in the illustrious present, the precious oil of boyhood's fervor, and get them each a king. Ofttimes these manifestations are very beau-

tiful. To many a man his noble wife is the hallowed head anointed. She says, "For my sake now, work on. I know work is hard and unrequiting; but, for me." And he replies, "Yes; for her sake, for her sake!" I tell you the coronation which some men give a good woman, with the photograph studied long, this day, in foreign ports and strange lands—"For her sake!"—is something awful, awful in its beauty and awful in its danger, lest the auburn head or crowned with wavy gray, should take the place of the Head crowned with thorns.

Well:—Into this throne of the soul Jesus steps, within the Christian's breast. He seats Himself lovingly, saying, "I am the Anointed. I am the permitted Christ, the true king." Is He yours?

"The trial of your faith is precious." Have you never crossed your neighbor's threshold, called at midnight because the babe had died? Your neighbors, amiable folk, never go to church. The frenzied mother meets you, scarce within the door, with a wild, despairing look, and casts her-

self, moaning, upon you with the cry, "Oh! my friend! You profess to be a Christian. Do you believe? Do you?" You, drawn upon at every pore of sympathy, yet gathering strength, joyfully respond, "Yes. I believe, believe with all my heart. It is well with the child." And so did you stretch your faith out like a bridge for these stumbling feet to walk upon. Ah, there have been hours in my life when I have felt like speaking *ex cathedra*. "Believe! Believe because—well because *I* believe. *I* can see, if you can not, the Unseen. I see heavens opening up beyond heavens, stars trembling beyond stars, see the blessed dead safe in Christ, and a rest that remaineth." As the wife and children of the fisherman flock about the coast-guard'sman and cling to him, whose practiced eye can pierce to the dividing of mists upon a stormy ocean whence the loved one delays his coming, so round you of tried faith in hours of sorrow cluster and cling the neighbors whose eyes are not yet opened. There is no such preaching of faith from books or pulpits. There is a contagion of faith. In times of financial depression like these, many eyes

are directed towards professed believers. The thought is, "Now is the trial of these Christians' faith; let's see if their minds are fortified as ours are not; if they feel themselves under Providential protection, as we can not; if, in the shock of contest, which may any instant carry down the strongest, they are calm where others are consumed with fear."

My friend said, "Look at me! Thirty-five years old and walking with a crutch from boyhood; coughing, to rend my body in twain; no comfort to my kindred, no comfort to myself. I am in bondage of pain. And the worst of it all is *I am not to blame; I inherited this imbecility* from my sickly parents. God? There can not be one. It is blind Fate. It would have been better if I had not been born."

Not so. At your birth a human soul, as well as the sickly body, came into existence. Look, my brother man. I open a gilded box; from perfumed velvet, white, and down, I take a diamond set in gold—and present it to the king. He knocks away its setting of gold, inserting

the jewel in his crown. Look again. A miner approaches the footstool of the throne, plunges his swart hand into his coarse robes, drags up a greasy rag, unfolds it, extracting now in his turn a diamond, and presents it to the king. The monarch accepting the jewel, puts it into his crown. Say thou, do the two brilliants reveal to any eye, which one came from the perfumed velvet case, and which from the soiled tatters? When we have shuffled off this mortal coil the soul shall be all in all. To have given it into the hand of the King by faith will be enough, and of the bent body or the stalwart it shall bear no signs.

I say it because I have seen the truth verified in the lives of very young converts, and older who were not previously familiar with systematic religious thought;—thousands of the sweetest Christian lives on earth never had a system of theology till after regeneration, when they began the study of their own past and present mental states, by the light of the Scriptures. The new birth to them was on this wise. “Oh,

thou Strong One and Pure, we are unhappy. It is because we have been going wrong. Oh! our suffering hearts! We stand before the Healer. The upward gazing seems to bring strange comminglings of tumult and peace. We will stand here gazing—nay, cast ourselves into His arms as a little child. Let Him take us and do for us all those mysterious offices which we know not,—all that a God would do.”

They rise up, as from a new birth. Many a wise man looks back upon his conversion hour, impressed as much with the mystery of the spiritual as of the physical birth. “I can not tell; I only know whereas I was once blind, now I see. It was the power of one Jesus.”

God never made a man and forgot to put a conscience into him. But many a man has forgotten the conscience God put into him.

Make an isothermal map of the three years of Christ's ministry. Color the districts of greatest healings red, the warm hue of summer.

Then the second year and Galilee are red, red. Yet it was then and there He was preaching "Repent." As He called men to repent, He healed their diseases. He thus convinced them that He was no mere critic of manners; but that He spake in love, and stood forth in power corresponding. He reached the soul through the poor body.

What is it to repent? First, *Stop*—stop doing wrong. Second, *Turn round and look back*. This is the literal meaning of the word, "a look behind," an "after view." Hence arises the pain, the emotional part of repentance, resultant on this backward look at errors and sins. Third, *Go back*—to the very spot where we are now conscious we began to wander from God, or to entertain false views of His rule over our destinies. Put it all in one word. "I repent" equals "I change my mind." The cry for forgiveness then becomes easy, natural, necessary.

What is it the Almighty seeks? My body? He can do what He will with that now. My fortunes? They are all in His hands. My soul? It is wholly in His power. No: He seeks from me virtue. But virtue is not to be had of me unless I possess it, and I can not possess it save as the result of my choosing to do the *ought*, instead of the *ought not*. Hence He reveals to me what I ought and ought not, and pleads with me to choose. Not proof-texts, but the whole Bible—the fact of a revelation at all, submitted to our reasoning faculties—declares the prerogative of moral freedom thus far.

God's To-Morrow is as free as if He never had a Yesterday. It is not so with man. Guilt is a fetter; it entangles us. No man that lives but has found himself hamstrung to-day by something he did yesterday. He may think that deed is covered, past, gone into nonentity: but it is not. Its effects are in his mental habit; in the memories of other people; in the life of the injured party met, maybe, face to face

on the street to-day*first for years. God is the being who never did wrong. Not ten years ago? Not ten thousand years ago. Millions of people have passed through His hands. He has had sole charge of their affairs. He never injured one. So I say it again, God's To-Morrow is free. Yours is not.

The world seems to think the Church warrants men good, from communion to communion. We do not. All that the Church says of its members is, "So far as we can detect, this man is living a life of Christian endeavor." We do not pronounce on the ultimate fact, which is between the soul and God. We do not wish bankers, merchants, insurers, in an indolent way or too careless to search for themselves, to take any man of this church for high trust because he came to the last Lord's Supper. Look up your man. His trustworthiness is a matter on which the Church may be deceived, as well as you. The demand of this church, laid on every soul is "As to the Lord, and not unto men." It is only to a very lim-

ited extent that any church officers can go behind that, in endorsing character.

Paul, Silas, Luke, and Timothy are on their way from Lydia's house, the centre of a little group mostly women, seeking the grassy banks of the Gaggitas, under the Thracian oaks, for prayer. It is the Sabbath. They leave the great, turbulent city of Philippi behind. Outside the gates this slave girl again. This time they stop and look at her. She is probably insane, since no mind could keep its balance and endure what she does. She is a priestess of Python. A strange beauty is in her wild, dark eyes, a voluptuous fascination in her motion, her dress and want of dress, the colors, the anklets and armlets of tinkling silver, the disks of gold as waistbands and necklace, the corslet as of a mimic warrior fair. She belongs to Delphi, down in Greece. She is a ventriloquist; and as she practices that trick men grow hushed in wonder. She lifts high in her twirling fingers a divining rod, and as she whirls in a rhythmic dance both charming and hateful, lets her

baton decline its silver or its ribboned end to answer questions, or cries out in meaningless "Breck-e-k-kex, coax, coax!" A crowd attends her, and, while she performs, the ready and hard hand of some agent, for them who bought her, own her, and imported her, glides through the crowd for pay. Her speech has a new burden just now. "These men," meaning Paul and his, "are the bondsmen of the Most High God. I am bondswoman to a different master. They show the way of salvation," with her laugh, cold and ringing to make one shudder. Paul will endure it no more. "I command in Christ's name this bewitching to leave her!"

Behold! Instantly, the deftly-thumbed wand drops from her high-lifted fingers to the ground. The lithe, poised body, sinks from the sustaining toe-tips to rest upon the soles of the feet. Her arms fall, nay, are clasping prayerfully before her, and that wildly heaving breast grows strangely calm. Her knees bend upon the tapestry spread for her dance, and into her dark, burning eyes there is coming, yes, coming, what was not since childhood, the cooling, cleansing dew of a woman's tears. She has

ceased to be a fiend, and has become a woman now.

“Come over into Macedonia and *help*.” Who is here who needs help? Young man, is the pool-box “making gain” of you? Be free! Poor mechanic, is your master, the corner grog-gery, “making much gain?” Be free!

It is not the young convert, glowing with his first love, with whose morals the Church has trouble. I have seen men converted and knocking for admission into the Church who were of late grievously profane swearers, suspected of habitual dishonesty in business with the custom-house and tax collector, living unhappily with kindred. My first thought was, “There is work for deacons, and for a pastor, to instruct in the moral law.” But we were surprised to learn that instantly and constantly, when once hearts had suffered this great change, wrongs were righted and the moral law observed in a purity which even rebuked our own perfunctory living. It is the old, cold *habitué*, whose piety is a mechanical function and not spiritual life, who

vexes the Church with bad morals. We would not hesitate to receive the worst man of yesterday, if we could be sure he was regenerate to-day: knowing by experience that his morals would *result*. To have been with Jesus, is to learn of Him. The ethical enlightenment is a part of the miracle. Perfect? No: for the gift of grace is not, since we are to grow in grace and knowledge.

Walking the summer fields with my friend, a botanist, I carelessly whipped every towering grass-head, or conspicuous weed with my stick.

"Look you! What are you doing to these innocents?" exclaimed my friend.

"It is nothing but a mullen stalk, or a Canada thistle. I always limb mullens and rase these bristling foreigners."

"But see," said he.

And with a skilful finger he opened the mullen's yellow blossom, spread out its beauty and expressed its perfume, dropping its honey upon a velvet leaf which no human

loom could weave. "Now God made this, as truly as He made you. I can see nothing but God's thoughts even in the pig-weed."

The Christ-follower strikes no man, for to him Christ is visible in every human face; and for him the crimson mark of purchase is on each forehead. "Destroy not him for whom Christ died."

Equanimity of temper, simple equipoise of the vital forces, preserved by good health and happy surroundings—I have often thought of my neighbor, who has looked in upon my grounds from his windows of comfort these nine good years; and then of my mantel clock which has run by weights and pendulum, these same nine years. There it sits, the provoking white face, tick, tick, when I come in from business; tick when I seek my bed; tick, tick, when in the morning I complain to it, "What! Ticking yet? Do you not know I have not slept a wink, for troublous cares?" When the parlors are full, it is ticking on in the same blank equanimity; when one is alone and sad,

tick, tick, with no feeling of gloom in its heart. That day I lost half my fortune, tick, tick, at evening, as if it was in no danger of the auction room. In the pauses of the music at the wedding, tick. When the casket was brought in and the assembly waited in dread silence for the preacher to begin, that white face, just above the other white face cold, had no turbulence of sorrow; only tick, tick. These nine years the weights have been faithfully wound, and no one has disturbed the old clock's balance there. Neither has my neighbor been disturbed: and he is known in all the country round as a most amiable man, who always wears a smile.

This very afternoon my grandchild, bent upon discovery, pulled an ancient wedge of wood from beneath the balanced mantel clock. With a jangle and a snarl it stopped its placid tick. A child's hand had thrown it out of its long equanimity.

Strange to say, my neighbor met me at the hedge to-day, and scowled. "I am sick; and besides am sued at the law, the first time in my life!" And he left me like a

churl. They say about town, that of late he's done a cruel thing and foul, to escape a threatening poverty. Did he think this jostling would never come, astonishing life that his has been?

Is it possible to adjust a human soul so that it is independent of these jostlings, like my watch, say? Turn it upside down, lay it high or low, it keeps the law. Christ seems to speak of a readjustment of the soul, the heart of man, something done divinely to that inner something we call human nature or disposition, whereby one may be at peace in the midst of all manner of evil. This miraculous equanimity must be, then, preferable to all other—must be the one great good of life on earth. “My peace I give you. Not as the world gives give I unto you.”

Can you not see him? The admirable young man. Well bred; entered on life with a good business of his own; dwelling in a good house, his own; with a clean good name, his own; who never did any thing wrong that he will

own; turning out of his own stables, under the sunset gold, behind two good horses, his own; catching sight of his clergyman at the street corner, with the church spire, stone to the tip, and well-cushioned within, beyond.

"To be sure now. One established in life as I am needs just one thing more. I might die. To be sure I am insured—but that next world? I will join the Church, and that will end *that* matter."

He does. Now who can say any thing against him? No one. Who can say any thing for him? Every one does. What do they say? "Admirable young man! A most admirable!" But in what respect? "Well—he is—an admirable young man." None sees, look they ever so closely, a vein of selfishness running through all. His behavior pays; his prayers make sure; his charities fulfil duties, and duty is one of its conditions. He would not neglect one of the conditions, wise man and prudent. When his friend dies, a profligate, he makes little preachments to young children. "This man, my poor friend, did not even have his life insured—to say nothing of

heavenly assurance. I am prepared, children; *prepared*. I lay great stress on that."

But Heaven is not a mere patrimony. To sit on His right hand and left is not Christ's to give; but shall be given to those who forgiven, redeemed, fitted, shall enter there. Heaven is the predicate, of which life is the subject. It would be better that this selfish man should almost forget Heaven, that Heaven may not forget him. Do you understand me? Let him think about life—such a life as Christ led on earth. That was a broken-hearted Life, so much of the way; ministrant to the poor, the sick, the ignorant. It bore a cross, and ended on a cross. It was most uncalculating; it was Heaven itself; and Heaven above would not be heavenly without It. Of course then, It returned thither at the end. Where else should It go?

Energy and fire are not all that one needs for a successful life. Sometimes they hurt more than they help. This young man, who was all energy and fire, who was going to get through

with the dirty work of fortune-making by thirty, and retire to a Swiss lake-side, see him to-day. He is like a locomotive amid Vermont snow-drifts. A fresh machine it is, just from the shops, with plough in front. Stand aside all! Pull out No. 24 onto a siding. Behold me! It hisses down the track, strikes, a white cloud; slower, sputter, fizzle, clogged! No glory now. How shall we get the thing out? If it had not been so mighty, it had not buried itself so far. Those fires—if they were quenched, ice would cease to form from melted snows, to shackle her eternally, 'twould seem.

An extreme case to be sure was this drunkard's widow. But she had ceased to feel, be sure of that. At first it was terrible; but she came to sit before it as the fisherman's wife drops her hands upon her knees when the storm is on in which she knows no boat could live these five hours past, staring blankly at the deep, benumbed. Then feeling returned a little. She hoped, exhorted, loved, and waited. Now she loves nobody—except the children, whom

indeed she clasps at times, and holds them till her stony heart thaws out again into feeling. Lately, she tells me, she can walk unshod on snows and not feel it. She never goes to church now, nor anywhere else, save to the pawnbroker's. She says there was no shock when she passed the wedding-ring over the counter: only the thought, "Some time this will end. I shall have pawned the last value."

"What then?"

"Then? I don't care what then."

"But the children?"

"Ah, yes, the children. Yes, I care—but—but, why I shall rest then. Do you not see?"

"We have come to feed you, and—"

"Feed them. I have not hungered these four months. I am dead, though breathing."

It was a broken heart. We did what we could, and are doing. She yet breathes. She is not insane, but benumbed. We are powerless. Only the great Physician can do for her. I bespeak for her this morning kindly prayers. Pray you for her, women of a happier lot, whose hands she clasped years ago in the aisles of this church, a sunny child. Can you guess her

name? And think as you pray that this grim world is full of those who are dead while they live; full of those whom no charity can cure, nor kindly human care nurse back to any thing like life again. They are fools who say kindness cures all. There are some hearts at least which need the new creation, a new birth, which only God can give, breathing into them that they become again living souls.

You have observed rays of light in paintings. A brilliant speck, say a candle's blaze; then widening like the letter V into splendid radiation, till lost in space. Turn the V of light perpendicularly, its apex on the earth, its flare heavenward and lost in distance. The intense and glowing point is conviction of sin; then wider, Repentance; wider, Faith in Christ; wider, and higher too, Pardon; and sweeping upward, widening as it mounts, Adoption of the regenerate soul; but higher still, and with a breadth for which eternity alone hath measure, Communion with God. This is the Christian religion

The college observatory is upon the hill-top adjacent to the farmer's fields. The farmer's boy has often seen, through the open door of June twilights, the professor at his tasks. Those mystic instruments of shining brass! The lad has an inborn fancy for star-gazing too; and often is upon his back, peering upward as the sundown marks the day's work done. He creeps nearer to-night, yet so stealthily that no sound disturbs the scholar through the summer doors. Five long hours the astronomer sat that night; now at his table, now at his glass, with pencil, with thought, with eye; enthralled at length in one long ecstasy, so that he seemed to forget the paper of his calculations clutched these many minutes in his drooping hand, as the vision of the unrolled heavens slowly verifies the dream and prophecy of years. The farmer's lad, as by a fascination held, has lain coiled up upon the outer stairs, wondering, wishing, yet as silent as the voiceless deep of night, has even crept along, so powerless in the spell that charmed him, till his rough hand touches timidly the drooping hand that held the arithmetic of

years, "Please, sir,—Pardon, I mean no harm,—please show a poor boy, who loves the stars as you do?"

"Why, yes. Show you? Yes, and the whole world, were they here. Indeed the world shall know it by to-morrow. It is a night in fifteen years, my son,—*the* night in my fifty years of life. Be seated. There, across the field about midway. Is it not sublime?"

But the youth turning disappointed from the instrument, the astronomer breaks in with "To be sure. I forgot." And in his eager joy the enraptured scholar whisks out sheet on sheet of computations, and, talking to himself, goes leaping over the calculations of half his working life-time. "There! Thus I reckoned it, and thus I've found it!"

The boy looks him in the face with, "Them's figers. I can't add. I didn't know figers had any thing to do with stars."

"Can not add? Oh no, he can not even *add*! And yet comes here—" The half angry tone relieved itself in a contemptuous laugh, excusable almost, if it be remembered from what heights he came to find one who could not even add.

Men turn to the historic figure of Christ not without admiration. They hear mature Christians speak of the rapturous joy of believers; of great soul-visions and communings with the Heavenly Guest, who sups with them; and they can not understand it. They can not see. No: and the reason is, they can not add. They know not the simplest rule of this exalted harmony. They have not even repented of sin. Yet they wonder that they can not see the glory without the shame, the crown without the cross, the end without the beginning.

Upon the broad, white bosom of the higher Alps, a boulder, warmed by the mid-day glare, has coated itself over with ice like royal purple and a crown of glory in the sunbeams. Far up behind it for a league the massy snows, and the rock upon the lip of the precipice like a king. When those vast fields start in avalanche, can this old boulder cry a halt, refusing to stir, saying, "I am king?"

"Yes! yes!" hiss and roar the snows. "You are king and leader over us white feathers: but

only because you lead and move when we move, riding at the head of our destruction. You pause? Then be dethroned."

Think of that prince of gamblers, whose fortune, influence, personal station and renown are invested in his bad vocation and his leadership therein—think of him pausing, repenting and becoming Christian. Think of the sceptical philosopher after a fifty years life-work, following his convictions—if he had them—and seeking Christ in a Baptist prayer-meeting. Why, he throws away his life-work, and abdicates his throne among the doubters. He is a leader only while he leads one way. Think of the Russian czar becoming a Protestant, a Methodist, even if he had the conviction. Think of "the most popular fellow in the club" turning from his brilliant captaincy, to work the works of the meek and lowly Jesus. Think of Caiaphas seeking to do justice unto Jesus. Behind the old high priest was a gorgeous palace, an official residence, splendid salaries and revenues, old families of the aristocratic class, the lust of power, the concealment of formerascalities, the defence of the profligate fathers,

the desire to be consistent with his own bad record,—behind him, and the whole Sanhedrim, these; and the devil with his angels. He pause and begin to do right?

The errand-boy loitering by my window, heedlessly pulled some blossoms to tatters, having snipped them from the border as he strolled out at the gate. Dreaming, or empty-headed, I know not which, he tore off petal after petal, unbraided the calyx, broke off the stamen, and even took pains to shred the green leaves, scattering the fragments behind him on the pavement. He whistled, and sung, and gazed about vacantly, yet ever and anon looking downward at his fingers, till it was time to quicken pace, the master being at the corner.

“Spent, but charged.” Thus read again the familiar faithful entry in the books of Nature, and the color-strewn pavement was the very page. The youth had had it—that fair creation, full of knowledge, would he take it; full of taste, refinement, all an artist’s culture; full of revelation about God, so that Jesus often

made of flowers and fields the texts for noblest teaching; he had had it, wasted it, and it was placed to his account.

Like many an opportunity frittered away, behind our feet the record showing: like many a blessing. Nothing is unaccounted for in creation. The book-keeping is very accurate; and, oftener than we think, the books are open to our own inspection, will we but turn and take the backward look. Who can stand in that great day of justice? Christ be merciful to us sinners.

You will not find a single illustrious life of godliness depicted in the Old Testament which had not this double purport, "God and my country." Abraham was "The Friend of God" and "Father of the Faithful Nation." Moses was prince and priest. David's psalms are few of them personal, but in nearly all he is the spokesman of his nation. Isaiah's moving pathos, Ezekiel's brilliant exhortation, and Malachi's awful sermon breathe this twofold sentiment, as the expression of loftiest piety, "Jehovah and our native land."

It might well be a motive to the young of our day, "I will serve God that I may the better serve my times, that I may bless my country."

It is rare to find a young man upon whom has dawned the conviction, "I am getting to be old enough to be responsible to God for the condition of my country. I feel upon my shoulders the pressure of my times. I must answer to high Heaven for the tendencies of modern society."

An inventor may hide his mechanism for a time in the seclusion of his workshop; but sooner or later it must be brought forth and applied to use among men. This is its perfecting. However diffident a man's first efforts towards reform of character, towards working out his Christian ideal, it must soon be known; it must be goodness applied; it must be seen in his conduct with men. Goodness is connate. It begins with self; but if it ends there, it is no longer goodness of character.

Let the boy, who to-day sweeps the store, forget to-morrow. This floor is his realm, the dust-motes his subjects, the broom his sceptre, and God has made him king. He would be an intruder behind the counter. But whoso offers to sweep for him intrudes, and reaching for his broom would usurp his kingly honors. Our divinely-appointed lot, if we be obedient souls, is To-Day; we have nothing to do with To-Morrow.

Every Christian soul should feel itself "called to be an apostle by the will of God." A call to any life-work is a commission which confers rights. It is a supreme moment in a life when one passes out of "I *must* discharge this duty" into "I have a *right* to. I am commissioned. I must be respected. All laws of the king's realm now favor me, for I am placed under this cross by authority."

The watcher at the head of the bed makes way for the sick boy's mother. The mother challenges the physicians, takes all responsi-

bility. It is her right to sit, day in, night out, in self-sacrificing vigil.

The Christian, called of God, has a right to suffer, toil, be criticised, and misunderstood for the Master's sake.

We may well marvel at the Divine patience. Discouraged utterly, a pastor and deacons exclaim, "This soul is dead. Why trouble ye the Master?" But He puts us all forth, saying, "Not dead, but sleeping!" and offering to go in alone with that soul, would cry, "Son, daughter, *I* say unto thee arise."

I have stood in dreamy mood looking up into the astral glories of a winter's cloudless night, through whose transparent air each distant star shone clear as planets, and asked the old question, Are any of these spheres inhabited? The astronomers' varied answers and the law of analogy leave me in confusion, out of which my soul *will* claim this much of certainty. If souls dwell yonder, they never knew

the curse of broken law; but God's will is done in heaven, in all the heaved-up arch which overhangs the earth. Then is this globe the wandering star of all the spheres; swaying off in the dizzy aberration of a lawlessness which threatens to shatter all its fair structure. Its "whole creation" is shaken by the sin of its noblest denizen, for whom it was made to be a home, the man. Failing to bless him, because he will not be blessed, it fails all. Milton saw the abode of God

"With opal tow'rs and battlements adorn'd
Of living sapphire.
And fast by, hanging in a golden chain,
This pendent world, in bigness as a star
Of smallest magnitude, close by the moon."

That heavenly shackle loosened, snapped,—why then to rescue and restore this one erratic ball, may not the Son of God well lend us three and thirty beautiful years? What though the trembling thing comes slowly back to harmony, yet rocking for these eighteen hundred years with the throes of its dread error? The hand of the Finder is steady upon it; and, ere long, the kingdom shall come again upon the

earth entire, as it is in Heaven. Christ's coming to save, to readjust, to harmonize this one splendid structure out of all the universe is rational, is worthy of a God.

Men become accustomed to the gospel phraseology, so that these precious words, so full of meaning to a believer's ears, are like the striking of a steeple clock, which, heard for years, wakes not the sleeper in chambers not sixty feet below its iron tongue.

"Christ seeking after me!" To realize the fact has this peculiarity; that immediately one finds himself. *I* am wanted? I, who did not even want myself? In a thronged street of a foreign city to feel the pressure of a hand, and, turning, to meet a friend's face, who assures us he was seeking after us, is no longer to be lost in a crowd, with innumerable temptations alluring. We are ourselves, with our own proper, reputable, home character to sustain. Moreover our heart whispers inly, "How kind of Him. He was seeking us."

If one accost the vagabond with "I was looking for you," his heart gives two leaps; the first, if perhaps you are the sheriff; the second of delight that a well-clad citizen has a word for such as he. Entering upon conversation which ignores his rags but treats with him as a man, with capacities—mayhap you have known him long ago as a skilled artisan and now bespeak him as if he might still be employed—he straightens himself, readjusts the wretched attire, and gives answers of intelligence. He finds himself. For one brief moment he has become a man again.

This self-finding searches him deeply however. Soon his own soul whispers that a decent man must have marked these tatters that tell the tale of vagabondage. His ready tongue grows silent. At last, with an outburst of confession, he puts it in plain words, that he is no longer the man you once knew him. He is fallen. All is gone. Yet now, that you have sought him, if you only would trust him! Yes, even if you would rebuke, correct, chastise, but trust him.

The etching is so familiar, that any hand may

fill out the picture with living forms. It is the way to save men.

Disparage not the wisdom of God. He needeth none to instruct Him. He saves men by sending His Son, who seeks after them, one by one. Mystery is in the gospel; but it is not all mystery to the careful student of human nature.

Last summer there grew a young flower-stalk under our eyes. It was almost perpetually in bloom, one blossom falling off only to make way for another, the season through. In an adjoining bed there towered another stalk of the same genus and variety; but it consumed half the season for its one lone blossom, and, that fallen, stood bare till autumn, when it might have put forth once more had not the unkindly frosts prevented. The gardener explained that one was a youth, the other very aged. A well-reared child in a Christian household is in almost constant blossoming of religious inquiry. At your knee he opens into serious, far-away questions about God, Heaven and

the whereabouts of his baby brother whom you lost. At unexpected moments he lifts his tiny hands, murmuring to the twilight stars that gaze into his window. The morning prayer, the hour in church, the sight of others at the altar, the slightest word of exhortation, the annual revival interest, all move him into a depth of contrition and great longing. Till at last appearing before the brotherhood to make profession, youth almost invariably narrates several crises in which it first began to ponder upon the soul's salvation.

How different is it with the life of the non-pious adult. Contrast the variety of serious religious convictions in a man past fifty years of age. Once in five or ten years a great danger or calamity forces him into the flower of tender thought. That is all. The harvest is passing, the summer is ending, and he is not saved.

There are laws of averages with regard to "opportunities" of becoming pious as there are in secular matters. There are under-laws, out of sight. Looking only at one or two house-

holds, one sex seems in danger of predominating. The under-law, girding the globe, preserves the ratio of male to female births in practical parity. Death seems an uncertain event to all save the Insurance Actuary, who reads the under-law. "Opportunities," that is eligible openings for successful employment, probably run something like this. Calculating upon a basis of ten thousand young lives, a youth under twenty years of age has ten good opportunities; between that age and thirty he has twelve; between that and thirty-five he has eight; on to forty-five, if he has wasted all these, he may look for three openings more. Beyond fifty, if he has failed to find his successful place in life, the under-law reads that he has less than one likelihood left.

God being ready at all times and in all circumstances to hear the penitent's prayer, experience shows that the majority of professed Christians are women. This sad disparity has been observed ever since we first had reliable statistics, though we believe it is slowly lessening. A discreet young man, in considering the question of personal piety, can not afford

to ignore the under-law, which reads that his sister is more likely to come to Christ than he. Is it disposition, or surroundings? Both. Not God. Embrace your opportunity while it is called to-day, the accepted time.

My own experience is that, given one hundred new converts, not three will be found past fifty years of age; between fifty and forty, not five; between forty and thirty, not ten; while more than eighty of the one hundred will have scarcely touched thirty years of age. "Opportunity" waits on youth. You who are accustomed to weigh percentages, read the under-law, which declares that more than eighty per cent. of the pious espoused their piety on the sunny side of young manhood. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, when the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."

It may well be questioned if there can be a friendship which will survive the test of years, founded on any thing less than sacrificial ser-

vice. We talk of affinities, but they fade; of kindred ties, but loan me your babe which I will serve to his young manhood, and I have his heart—not you. In fashionable homes the hired nurses serve in love and steal little hearts, if you are not careful. We often make grave mistakes with kinship. We presume upon a mystic tie, of which the story books make much, at which nature laughs. He is my brother, and is bound to love me. It matters not how I treat him. Hence too often the sorriest friends are one's own kith and kin. Many a man is to-day striving to stand true to blood relationships from a sense of duty. But looking over their heads to another, tried and proved through years, he exclaims, "O that you were my brother, old heart of oak! I have reason to love you better than my own."

The "missionary spirit" originates in the breast of our heavenly Father Himself; and is nothing else but the disposition the true God has to make Himself known to all His intelligent creatures. It is no weird, mystic

interest, attainable only by a fortunate few of the pastors who have caught it somehow and somewhere inexplicably, or within the reach only of a few churches strangely known for their missionary zeal, while others hopelessly chase after this will-o'-the-wisp. If a soul knows the true God, vitally and experimentally, he burns to tear aside the veil which hides him from others; or to correct distressful misconceptions of his Fatherly goodness in any minds. He takes his willing place amid such awful preachers as the heavens, which declare His glory; and the firmament, which shows His handiwork; the majestic providences, from Babel to the destruction of the Spanish Armada; with miracle, angel, prophet, seer, preacher, and Christ Himself, whose mighty callings have been to reveal, to manifest the one true God.

The "missionary spirit" in a Christian church is not charity for the bodily pains of hunger, cold, or sickness; nor pity for the victims of heathen tyrants; nor zeal for social improve-

ment and secular education among the darkened sons of men. An intelligent human compassion serves these ends. There is indeed a nobler than natural compassion, moving the hearts that are Christ's. There is a Christian "charity," using the word in its modern sense. But the spirit of missions is more fundamental than even Christian charity. It is the all-mastering desire to preach Christ, the Lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world. It would cure at the fountain-head. The modern church must make a distinction between a plate of soup and the simple story of Christ crucified for sinners. Common kindness would give to the starving; but only believers can be relied upon to forward the preaching of the cross. We must rise above catch-penny pleas, and rest our appeals upon the high ground of spreading abroad our religion in the earth. This is what we ought always to mean by the word "missions"; applying to the other deeds the words the language so richly affords us.

Do we dream of shutting up three hundred millions of people, in China, from contact with the rest of the race? Man is swarming over this little globe. A traveller can encircle it in eighty days. If it was their bodily presence we had alone to fear! But it is their ideas, and ideas are not chained. There is nothing in Western Rationalism or license, but has its counterpart and encouragement in the East. It is ignorance of a spiritual God, the consciousness of sin and the madness of sin's pang. There is nothing the matter with the Chinaman but also troubles every unconverted bonanza king or politician of America: only the one case is complicated by ignorance, and the other aggravated by knowledge. There is but one cure for both, namely, the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is a period of youth when the person we are least acquainted with, of all the wide world, is ourselves. As in country houses, in the long brilliant days of advancing summer one is tempted out of doors; we can not endure

the close rooms, but must walk afield, musing in hammocks, or prone upon the grass under old trees, the book fallen crumpled at our side; we only go indoors to snatch a meal or haltingly retreating from lawn to veranda because it is deep night, when at last the gnat-soiled lamps are lighted only to show the way to bed. And on a day of rain we are like starlings in a cage, protesting if there be not soon a breaking from the north-west we will robe for it and dare the storm. Grandma, how can you sit content within, each day? But in winter we dwell within and learn each nook and comfort of the wide old dwelling. Youth lives out of doors of itself. The schoolmaster is telling you then of Cæsar and Frederick; of other men's thoughts, but nothing of yourselves. You do not even know your own bodies, and what makes for health or disease. You know botany and astronomy, while, from flower to star, you are ignorant only of yourselves. Society tempts you abroad, so that you deport yourselves for others' tastes. If tenderly reared, no question of moment is forced home upon your inly discovered fitness, but too kind "advice" settles

every problem for you. The soul is not trained to repose with itself; in its own secret, noble chamber, and know itself. A rainy day, with God's Spirit, might lead to heart-searchings and repentance. Wherefore rainy days are sent. In age we must sit at home. Alas if our home be desolate then!

The broad leaf of the sunflower plant presents at a glance stamen, midvein, veinlets, and veinulets. It is five inches by three. Unless you are familiar with the microscope, however, you would not suppose this little speck upon my paper of the size of a pin-head was an equally perfect leaf with every appropriate part. Look upon this microscopic photograph of the same, enlarging it to five inches by three. From stamen to veinulets, all are there. God is perfect everywhere.

To read of the way of salvation in Romans, with every step described in philosophical perspective and then of the thief on the cross, is perhaps to conclude that the later entered paradise by a simpler way than Paul sets forth. But

a careful scrutiny reveals, in the malefactor, consciousness of sin and its confession, fear of God and belief in the Innocent Sacrifice, assent to Jesus' Messiahship, in that he addressed Him as "Lord" of a kingdom, and trusting prayer with its absolute self-surrender.

Midwinter thunder-storms afford but a single flash of lightning; but in that one flash the benighted traveller has seen the distant hills, the naked forests rocking in moaning winds, the farmhouse near, the bridge, the stream, the buckles of the harness and bolts of the vehicle.

Be assured the soul *may* take each needed step in an interval of dying too brief for our measurement. Between the explosion and the falling of the wall; between the crash and the coming in of waters, now at knees, waist, lips, the soul may grow sedate, review a life, fear God, repent of sin, recognize Christ, and cast itself upon His mercy. Thank God, the narrative of the dying thief repentant, spells out the eleventh hour upon the dial-plate of mercy. The X and the I at the right hand.

But the soul *must*, as well as *may*. The small

leaf must be as perfect as the large. God is perfect everywhere, and every conversion must be a perfect handiwork of God. Will you however take the hazard? For in that sudden hour there will be a tempest of great darkness; a swirl of wild winds; efforts to escape; sorrowful remembrance of friends, one by one passing in review of adieu; hurried calculations of business affairs abruptly shattered; a breath wasted in a curse; a cry for life here, when one should only pray for life hereafter—and *you may miss your way*. The other malefactor missed his way, and, stumbling, fell forever.

My friend will rest his soul on nothing “of which he is not certain.” After all his reading and thinking, refusing faith, he tells me he is certain of only three things, namely: That he lives, that he suffers, that he must die.

There is just one condition of absolute solitude in our lives; one possibility of being utterly alone. It is not on the mountain-top, nor

in the crowded street. It is not even when one thinks. It is the moment of decision; the supreme instant of the "I will."

Sudden death is a stern accountant, and acknowledges only the actual footings on our books. With Death in this guise all our plans of intended good, however grand or noble, go for naught; he reads off work verily done, coldly saying, "That's what you are. It amounts to so much, and by that you must be known among men."

A man is austere and unsympathetic in his family. He rises early and toils late. Years pass in which he has seemed a sullen, or at best an uncompanionable, husband and father. Yet he loves his household ardently in his secret heart. He excuses himself in that he is so busy. He intends to reveal himself one of these days. The community regard him as a hard man. But he will surprise the city, when he manifests himself. To-day he does drive sharp bargains; but the world should wait. He knows what is in his own heart.

To-morrow there is a fainting at his desk. He revives to whisper to his children, "You have not known me. I loved you all the while, and was about to—" when the poor lips grow stiff. They only know him for what he was in fact:—cold and hard.

When I was a lad I used to walk on before the hay-makers, by the edge of the standing grass; and, as the scythes of the six mowers flashed and swept in tremendous, panting unison, laying low a wide space of two rods, I apostrophized the conspicuous clumps of clover as yet untouched. "Destruction is coming, you must go down. And you, tuft of stray oats nodding so proudly; and you, family of thistles, arrogant and ready to seed. All, all must fall." I have heard men so speak of God's all-levelling power over souls. It is indeed true, that, as He lives, every knee shall bow and confess. But is not that enforcement an event of eternity? On this side of the Judgment He condescends to plead with men, tenderly inviting all that labor and are heavy-laden that

He may give them rest. Earth enjoys the smile of the Lamb. The day of His wrath is to come.

In a music store yesterday, a German pianist dropped down before his favorite instrument and indulged his reverie over the keys. An Italian violinist sauntered to his side and added his notes to the dream. Neither of these two performers could speak the language of the other. An English songstress, sitting hard by, touched by the familiar strains, joined her voice without words; while a spell fell over us all, listening to divine harmony. The performers had no language in common, nor had the listeners; but the love of melody wrapped us in a holy unity which dull speech would have profaned. The love of Christ on earth unites all hearts; and is the sure prophecy of that far-off brotherhood with which, out of every nation and with every tongue, men shall sing the new song in heaven.

The problem of personal salvation is narrowed down to this, Are you willing to be converted? If you say yes, with all the heart, the Holy Spirit is ready to guide you step by step. You may desire, without being willing. You have often desired to visit that stupendous structure which spans the East River; to count its massive stones; to study the complex figures of the engineer; to stand among its iron shrouds and hear the melody of an Æolian harp which gales twang in grand diapason; to catch the views of cloud-land and plain where the two firmaments commingle at one's feet. As you dream, you desire ardently. Are you willing? Will you know all? Come. The hand of the custodian is upon the latch of the outer gate. You receive all you are willing to receive. But soon you cry halt. Some sudden terror or reluctance seizes you. Does the guide fail? Not so: but you are not willing to go on, though vain and white-faced Desire is still gazing upward to what the Will declines. Say that you are willing to know the heights, depths, lengths, and breadths of the Christian life, and the work of your soul's saving is as good as done. The

Holy Spirit knows best what door to open for you first; whether doctrinal obstacles, mysteries of faith, repentance of some darling sin, or the cross of sacrifice; but He will never leave you, till you have passed over the river into the Eternal City.

The more trivial our excuses the more do they insult Divine Love. A man is waiting for his friend's company, before he seeks Christ; or dislikes some church-member; or quibbles over a minor point of doctrine; or is too poor in pocket to join a church, or too busy. It is because these are trifles that there can be no breathing room for love, stifled in the mote-loaded air.

From insults to love come tragic divorcements of fondest hearts. The lone wife, pacing her room, pausing at the window wistfully looking into the night, is saying, "If it were some great, grand errand which kept him so much from my side; if some noble passion for art or study or even business, with which I was forced to share his hours. But when it is a whim, the

idle preference for the club, the race-course, a horse and trifles, undiscoverable trifles! Preferred to *me*, living, warm, and offering myself to him. It is not grief. It is love insulted.' She blushes and throbs with the shame of light esteem, all undeserved. Hence come estrangements wide as the gulf between Heaven and Hell.

Christ, the adored of angels, stands offering Himself, His exquisite companionship, His purity of pardon, providence, and peace. He sets ajar before man's eyes the door of Heaven, through which gleam splendors and float snatches of rare song. Man affronts the ready Donor with contemptible chaffering and balancing of paltry excuses. Whoso loveth not Christ "more than these" is "not worthy of Him," because he can not love Him.

Not unfrequently certain so-called "worldly pleasures" are the sole obstacles in the way of an espousal of Christ. But why not take them along with you? Because, in my mind, an issue seems raised over them. Very well. It

is no kindness, to one in your state of controversy with God's Spirit, to suggest that the Church is not so rigorously puritanic concerning amusements as it once was; for that is not the point in debate. The fact is, God sees there is something you prefer to His favor; something dearer to you than a Saviour's love; something you will not surrender if He asks it, and as the token of complete submission. And if it were as innocent as Abraham's love for Isaac, there can be no peace till you are willing to yield all to Him.

It is the piqued child's endeavor to dissent in some one last act necessary to absolute obedience. The parent can not desist till the last triviality is performed. The child is anxious to evade by one tittle, as the sign of that he was not wholly subdued. We all remember that peace came only with utter assent. We obeyed all.

What the soul needs is a cry, My Father! Nothing is to be preferred to thy favor. Give me that, and I seek no indulgence contrary to Thy loving will.

Christ asked the disciples to watch with Him in Gethsemane. Tender touch of nature, to make Him with the whole world kin. In any great trial this craving of companionship, if no more; if no hand can help nor voice can soothe, yet a motionless, silent companionship; who is a stranger to the desire? It begins in childhood, when two infants will walk hand in hand "in the dark," where neither would go alone. Do these two innocents calculate that the twain are more defensible against "the giant" than one? By no means. It is the embryo of that wordless hunger of the soul, developing as life broadens, and finding its most exalted manifestation in Gethsemane. Invalids, who have counted the strokes of midnight wakeful hours, conjured by the wall flashes and flickers of dim lamps, and need no other service, cry out—Father! Mother! Some one! It is nothing, only to hear you answer that you are there. Then we sit by them, long and patiently, perhaps dozing disciple-like as we hold their hands, saying and doing nothing, but *being*—near them. Through the streets of Paris, between prison and block, the most desperate were often

observed sitting upon the cart's edge, hand in hand. Triumph wants friends also. Who would wish to prosper, if no loved one could see and share his doing well. As young men lose fathers who were the inspirers and spectators of their achievements for a little space of the life-race, it seems at first that death has killed our ambition, by snatching away the audience; till we take refuge in the dream that our beloved may be among that heavenly cloud of witnesses, still looking on.

Jesus knew, as the crisis approached, that the acme of sorrow must ever be met in solitude; but up to the outer vestibule of that solitude He brought the eight disciples; and, to the last inner door, He brought the three. Even when He must be alone, in conflict and victory, He yet emerges twice to feel the helpfulness of His beloved near Him. He wants our sympathy still, in His warfare with sin on the earth. He who so wanted the society of men will have His own with Him where He is, at last and forever.

To stand in the presence of some exalted human character is to be thrilled with the consciousness, "I also am a man." The experience, however, is incomplete. We are to bend over the besotted human form, curled insensible at the curbstone, reflecting, "I also am a man: and by this foul insult of sin upon my kind am I dishonored."

It may seem strange to the unbelieving world, but the fondest scene in the life of Jesus to the believers' heart is not where the Christmas stars are gently beaming through the robes of angels who sing noblest overtures above the Holy Child. Calvary, that hill of tragedy, has for us a softer charm. The distance of years obscures to our eyes, in moments of rapturous vision, the angry rabble once swarming up its slopes, and we see no man save Jesus only. The hoarse cries have died upon the air of centuries, and we hear no words but Christ's last prayers. The rasp of cords and hammer strokes we hear not, nor think upon any of the torturous machinery

for His murder. Nor, in our most blessed hours of contemplation, does He always seem to us to be in pain, but in calm repose; as if the rugged hill had changed into a temple beneath the skies of Holy Land, and the wooden beams a throne, a high pulpit of great honor, against which He leans in triumph looking out upon a wide and welcoming world. The blackness of that unnatural night has then for us removed, restored to white of day again. We see Him in the light. His countenance is light, His head is beaming with a halo, His hands extend in benediction. The whole is to us as the sun of a morning in the spring-time, and our winter is forever passed away. We picture Him upon the cross to our little children, who, far from being shocked, are gently won upon. Our women pause hard by, gazing with yearning eyes; and our noblest men find in that vision happiness complete for faculties refined.

There are some home-circles in which the mother is in advancing health with the ad-

vancing years. Strangely preserved, time but adds a riper maternal beauty. The children never saw her but in robust strength. There are others of us who can not remember when mother was not an invalid. We were warned to be gentle in our play about her knee; we grew up to be lads, proudly supporting her tottering steps upon the lawn,—a rare and genial summer's day upon the lawn,—enviously watching the westering sun. We recall days of oppressive stillness in the house, not once or twice, when we sat hushed and huddled in a distant chamber, many coming and going at the gate, father's face an agony, called down to kiss the hand so moveless on the coverlet a last farewell. Living yet, it is as rare flowers survive the rigorous winters, under glass. The influence of such a woman, when she endures well, her noble courage, her calmness, her unrepining, her exalted trust in Christ—children, themselves grown and in sieges of trouble, bethink them of her, with such inspirations to fortitude as no impersonal doctrines can effect. The outer world wonders at the childrens' constancy, themselves in trou-

ble; not knowing of the hidden life-chapter which has taught them, and ever must go on teaching them, while memory endures.

"As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth" is not simply the description of Christ's meekness: it is a hint as to the best way to approach mental conflicts, to pass through temptations. He said also, "The Prince of this world cometh; hereafter I shall not talk much more with you." The soul must knit itself for war, must be abstracted, must be wordless. Words adjourn the hour of action, and eat up reason, affections, conscience, will. Further advice confuses by presenting added alternatives for adjudication, which fatigues the soul before action has even begun. Have you never shut yourself into your room, resolved never to leave it, or suffer another to enter, till you had decided? Alone with God and His angels the ordeal is terrible, but heroic. Some of you talk too much with your friends, or foolishly study the example of others concerning your duty. Go

by yourself. Fall upon your knees. Fight the good fight of faith to victory. When we next look upon your face let us see the glow of triumph there.

When a brooklet is aroused by spring floods there is the deep under-purpose to reach the sea ; and the surface manifestations, froth, dead wood, noisy babblings. A human heart in conflict over duty has the under-current of desire, at least it ought. But it has also froth, drift-wood and babblings of its holiest secrets. How garrulous we are in trouble. We talk to any one who will listen. Hence at such times one should keep the company only of his best, most discreet friends. What a treasure-box is such a friend's memory, after we get cool of our fever, and open it. The best friend is God. Complain and moan into His ear. He will keep that which you have committed to His hands. Who else ever did ?

There is a final transition period in the struggle of penitent souls, which I, for one, am disposed to profoundly respect in its sacred seclusion. I can walk about them, within reach of the faintest call, and pray for them; but they do not wish to talk, there is nothing more I can say; leave them with God. It is a rare stalk which I have longed to see blossom, and fingers itch to meddle; folding down the calyx you one side the bud, which is no sooner done than regretted; that one petal which seems to bind, is loosened—and at once carefully replaced. No, I have done all I can; enriched, watered, and purged it of every parasite. Now, set in the sunlight, it shall be left to its own sweet birth into beauty.

It is the mother and daughter, at neighboring windows through the long golden hours of many an afternoon, each busy with the needle, but busier far with thoughts. The younger is feeling after Christ. The elder is watching and praying. Their eyes meet, speaking volumes, but the sacred silence is unbroken by words. Now and then a question, eagerly answered, but no rude preaching nor prying curiosity fore-

ing its way into the secret vestibule where Christ and His Spirit alone must work the works; till at last the young heart opens wide to the Master and to all. It is not every soul that needs such treatment, possibly; but surely there are who do.

Nor is it indifference here delineated. It is the hardest of tasks to be a full-charged cloud ready to burst upon the earth, and yet decline to uprear young rootlets with a deluge, and at the right moment to part asunder, that the sun may give life and growth.

A busy merchant, with the first flashes of gray about the temples, sits opening the most prosaic morning mail. At length, over one letter, he pauses long, reading how "the transfer of the little remains to his family plot has been successfully completed, at the left of his father's mound," with enclosure of a bill for certain dollars and cents. "So then, all together at last. Remains? I wonder what they found, after all these years?" And stepping to the window, where a little strip of blue sky peeps

down amid blank walls, his eye goes on a search in obedience to his thought. The body he has; but the spirit,—it was his first born,—*his*,—where? The dull cares of business recall him, and he forgets, till evening; when, at the home tea-table, he remarks, “My dear, I heard from Mount Auburn to-day, and that’s arranged at last.”

Observing tears,—

“Why, Mary! It was more than twenty years ago!”

“Twenty-one last month,” responds the more accurate mother-heart.

Drawing near to bend above him in tender caress, she goes on to confess how her heart, in calling the roll of its loved ones, always includes the tiny face loaned to them for a few short months so long ago; and that her thought makes eager search, where? Past what star of the evening? In what direction of dim space? “For he was ours, you know, and is ours still. He was so feeble and defenceless, to fly so far!”

It is in such hours that there comes a mighty yearning to every true man, somewhere, some

time, to gather all one's own again. Not in fenced plot of mouldering earth, with iron gate and fastenings, but on a fair, far shore, where life shall make reply to life.

There are homes so united in Christ, whose departed are so felt to be with Him, whose living are so trusting in Him, that they are one family yet, part on earth part in Heaven. There are others, who are troubled with a great fear. Of the dead, there was one who left no token of faith. Could he have foreseen the anguish he inflicts by his tokenless departure! Or it may be, while infancy is safe ever, maternity, yet on earth, has no hope in Christ. Whatever may be the recognitions or affinities of eternity, while yet here below there is no blessing so beatific to a believer's breast as a whole family united in Christ.

Fifty years ago a family of four oaks sprang side by side from the soil, and straightway three of them grew upward towards a patch of blue sky revealed far up among the umbrageous canopy of older trees. For a while, how-

ever, they had to endure ground odors, and the early twilights of their green-walled prison house, though now these many years standing crest and crown above forty acres of woodland. The fourth oak paused, stunted half-way up, for some reason, often complaining to his three lusty brothers with question if he also was not kindred, if they did not all have common root-room. The giants confess relationship, but point out that it is impossible to hold high communings with one so low down. If the groundling would only grow up to them, they suggest, where branches softly interlace in fraternal caresses, moved by zephyr-breaths, proudly toss together their caps in air with stronger winds, and, heads together, wondering over the vainly counted stars. In human families the spiritually minded hold eminent converse from which the non-religious members, must needs be separated. A kind-hearted husband has never been the religious teacher of his children, for instance; but the pious wife alone has bent their knees in prayer, indoctrinated them and guided them to Christ. The mother, with three of the children, hold ex-

alted converse of spiritual and heavenly things. What an ecstasy would thrill them if father and the older brother would grow up to take with them views of such things as are spiritually discerned. Dwelling together even now in affection, yet within the noblest realm of being they never sympathize. The woman, indeed, for years has been obliged gently to counteract, to weed out from the home the paternal influence, so far as religion is concerned. There is a world of meaning in the "fear of his example," which she only whispers to her own heart. The unification of that home should take place about its noblest types; the two should become like the best, not the best like the two.

When the ships of Europeans first crossed the western Atlantic, approaching these shores, they were puzzled to observe that, while sails were properly set to westerling winds and the rudder rightly held, they yet drifted out of their course to the northward. They were ignorant of the Gulf Stream, which, with its

warm genial current, lay round them for miles on every side. When worldly-minded men go out into the sea of business, seeking gain, they take no account, through ignorance, of that Great Power who "maketh poor and maketh rich," and are at a loss to account for the strange sweepings out of their purposed course. The spiritually-minded business man always takes into account this unknown co-efficient, God's will and pleasure.

I have observed, on resuming arbor-seat and book after a bright July night in the country, a row of solemn-looking larvæ reposing unafrighted upon the opposite bench. Full of wonder that these usually timid insect spectators now regarded me so attentively, I rise to observe that each is but a chrysalis, a perfect outer semblance, from whence the butterfly has gone.

Many a preacher would be astonished could he know how generally have the spirits of his auditors, upon a Sabbath morning, fled afar, to the distant store or city; while the bodies

only, like the chrysalis, sit, solemn-eyed and glassy, in the present pews.

On the Sabbath, a mechanic lays aside hammer and saw; a laborer folds his arms. All can see at a glance that they are observing the day with abstention from toil. The business or professional man, however, carries his workshop in his brain, his utensils never being of manual toil. Who can detect whether he is resting on God's day or not? Only the All-seeing Eye; and that vision often observes the most pretentious religionists busy in the brain workshop, forging in silver and gold for the morrow.

Those who have served a battery upon the battle-field tell us that, at intervals, they are forced to pause, in calm self-possession, heeding not the awful excitement, that the guns may cool; yes, and that the smoke may lift to furnish accurate aim; yes, and because ammunition is exhausted. No Christian can fight the

battle of the week without the quiet Sabbath to cool off his guns. He needs repose of soul. He wants heavenly breezes to lift the earth-lowering shadows. He must replenish his store from the secret place of prayer and meditation.

It is a good ending to a life which counts. A good beginning is easy enough. Who has not made hundreds of them? Look at my wheat field. The yield will be light this year. You are city-bred, and hence admire these knolls of straight-standing, lofty-headed spires, which, you suggest, would look well in a painting. I would give all these erect acres for that little patch three rods square just down in the sunny sag yonder. There the heads are bent in humility, for they carry ten times the grain to the ear. What struggles have those heavy-laden endured, against winds and rains, till almost overcome at times; but through all the summer they have successfully carried their ideals.

To-morrow come the angel reapers. God is not concerned about numbers. Are there few

that be saved? It is not for us to answer; but we know that in that day, not momentary impulse, not pride and ostentation of hasty resolution, but genuine hearts, will be gathered into the eternal granges.

Pity the poor souls who, abandoning Christ, seek again a place among the sneering, mocking, wicked world. The agony of such spirits at times must be most pitiable. Peter, furious, swore with a mad oath that he knew not the Man. A once proud merchant who has failed, walking past his former business stand overhears men remark, "That is the old A. corner. You know the old A. place." He cringes. He is that same A. "Why will they keep alive my shame by reminding each other what I once was, in contrast with what I now am? I would like to burn it down." Ah! let him dare! What has been, has been.

There are backsliders who would be glad to burn to ashes of all human forgetfulness the most beautiful years of their life, that men might not have the *data* of contrast with their

present. But those years will not burn. They must stand. Hence, frenzied hearts, they do the next best thing; they try to live so badly that no one will believe they ever could have been good. What depths of sin or infidelity do they sound!

There must be something wrong with the locomotive or its load, when the chief employment at the stations is to get up steam for the next transit. There must be something wrong in that Christian life which employs the Sabbath, habitually and with deliberate calculation, in "resting up" for the secular exertions it foresees on Monday. The Sabbath is thus hypothecated to Mammon. He who overworks all the week, expecting his Sunday sleep, lounging and dull staying at home to compensate him, mortgages the Lord's Day. In a good, healthy life each day's tasks ought to be met and matched by the strength of each day: and the six days of toil to stand like a bodyguard about the freedom of the Sabbath, the princeliest of them all.

What would you say of the householder who, proposing to keep out the night from his dwelling, should meet the twilight at the doors and beat it back with hands of flesh and blood? Rather light all your candles upon candlesticks, set every chamber in softest blaze, so that the glowing apartments repel the gloom with, "We are full—full of light; there is no room for gloom."

Meet temptation with holy thought and illustrious desire to know and do the will of God. Whatsoever things are pure, think on these things. If there be to you any sweet loves at home, to you, traveller; if any tender memories of the just; if any recollections of noble deeds which you have seen or shared; if any old songs and hours of worship, go within to ponder them. Listen to the silver tones of Him who sups with you, and thus forget the outward roar of night winds, being in the bosom of true peace.

A traveller was pursuing his journey well till a butterfly sailed across his path, and, grasping at it, he failed to catch it. Again he snatches,

and again the bright wing eludes him. He turns to pursue it, despite the calls of companion pilgrims pointing to the declining sun. He will not be baffled by an insect! Away over stile and through hedges, till he falls with a broken leg. But he got the butterfly, crumpled and dead in his fevered palm. In after years this contemptible trifle becomes a most momentous event in destiny.

"You were at Gettysburg that noble day?"

"No, it was an insect."

There comes an hour, also, when two stout limbs would have served him to swim out of drowning waters, and shoulder a child besides. But the butterfly of forty years ago flew away with ten years of his life and he drowns. As if life had no gigantic obstacles to change its destiny, that youth must endow trifles with such power!

Some men persistently decline to face calmly the thought of their own decease. Such lives are like those catch-all closets into which shiftless housekeepers thrust every thing with a

whisk or fling, not caring more than that the reluctant door can be crowded to and locked. When death comes it generally falls to the lot of the weary wife to open that door, while all the sad confusion falls prone at her feet. Beggars! Why did he not tell us we were not rich? Disgraced! Why did he not explain it? Craven hearts! Men are conscious of shameful entanglements and wrongs, which, while they live, they can bridge over and tie up with a hand skilful for concealment. But when they are gone they must know the dreadful revelations shall tumble down into the light of day, to crush the fond hearts who loved them best.

The lion's whelps pause not to think what taint of cruelty, of pain, of sorrow to others is on the bleeding morsel flung down to them; but fall to the more greedily for the smell of blood. If the heirs of some men would only stop to think, to smell the blood that cleaves to every item of their estates; how to gain this parcel there was such struggle that another, losing it, flung a curse after it; how this is stig-

matized with jealousy and envy; how in gaining this the sire first began to neglect his Christ and to disregard his own honor: if by some angelic executive each item of their inheritance could be traced to its cruel and offensive getting, with divine revelations, possibly the patrimony might go begging. "Sons, daughters, who will receive this, the price of your father's honor? and this, of his soul?" "Not I." "Nor I." "Nor yet I. Why, therefore, let us beg."

There is that family of three excellent maiden ladies, poor souls, who would not harm a worm, for years living quiet lives, upon their ample inheritance. Yet they eat a tainted loaf, wear mildewed silks, flash in lustre-dimmed diamonds, carry tarnished books of devotion to the church, and dispense defiled though ample charity. It is no fault of theirs, God pity them! for they do naught but take the semi-yearly stipend from the faithful cashier. But their inheritance is defiled. "Father? We rarely speak of him. Dead—and—gone—to—" The facts are that, to win what so innocently these girls enjoy, the man degraded himself till he was but a swaggering, profane ox, with tremendous brain and

stomach, but a spirit dead within his bosom. His religion was "Get gain."

Thousands of passers-by look upon his heirs with "Ah! you are not to blame; but we remember your father, curse him! We have reason to."

It is sometimes terrible. The broken, old mechanic glares upon the fair-faced babe trundling through sumptuous gateways as he passes, and hisses that "'Tis the third generation from the old vampire who sucked my blood and left me for dead."

Young men, it is not simply to leave an inheritance to our children, but an inheritance undefiled.

How different the Christian's heavenly inheritance. In all the toil of our great Founder, even to His piteous death, there is naught to bring a blush of shame to the cheeks of the heirs. It tells of no man's pain but His own; no man's blood but His own, shed upon a cross in which we glory.

Great joy is very near to sorrow. One be-thinks him instantly of the beloved dead who would have so eagerly partaken, but died without the sight. Joy is like the precious oil of olives. It softens, but also opens the lips of every healed wound the past has given. What mother saw the happy Christmas morning, and watched her little ones and larger jubilant, with skies above them all as bright as ever-noon, but felt the very bliss unstop her long-sealed memory griefs? Stealing off, you missed her for a space, till, found in the upper, silent chamber, the dead boy's room, bitterly weeping on the day of smiles.

Hence old lives often warn us, supposing they have found a truth, "When happiness is guest, then grief is knocking at the door." Not so. Rather, happiness is a generous guest, and softly whispers of the absent, lest they should be forgotten. Grief is a more selfish visitant, claiming undivided entertainment; yet even she, if hosts insist upon it, will conjure pictures of more peaceful scenes from long ago.

Waiting in a parlor I leaned over the piano, when, to my surprise, it spake to me.

"Why does no one play upon me?"

"Really, I should judge some one had just left you as I entered."

"No matter. Play upon me. Do you not play? The more I have the more I want."

"Very well. The next person that enters shall be informed of your wish. But what kind of music does a piano like best? There is "Robert le Diable," "Duke Street," or "Home, Sweet Home."

"Any thing!"

"Indeed. Yet what a difference!"

"Any thing; any thing so that I quiver and throb with sensations."

Am I speaking to the sentimentalist? Plainly, your emotions are not worth a tittle, as indices of your approach to pure religion. There is no sense of duty at their beginning nor ending. You are in the habit of playing with feeling. You luxuriate in being played upon. Your religious emotions are your sport.

To-day they run riot with you, upward, reading the religious novel, till, contemplating the

saintly heroine, you are bathed in tears. To-morrow feelings sweep downward; and in despondency you think on the dead, or the cold, cold world, or your own death, which you portray in imagination, wondering who would weep, till again, all tears, you close the hour with the assurance that you have spent a profitable season. Not so. This is your habit of years. There is no "What must I do?" in it. The opium-eater or wine-bibber is your companion.

I have met strong men who craved this drunkenness of religious pathos. Assenting all too readily to my exhortations, they respond "I had as noble a Christian mother as ever lived. I love to think how the dead woman prayed for me." Man! And yet you do not comply? To think would drive most men mad. "No, I get soft in thinking, my eyes fill. Yes, she prayed for me, poor sinner that I am. I am a very hard heart, sir; always was. All the family became converted but me. I shall be separated from them, doubtless, in eternity. Glad to have talked with you. It has done me good."

In God's name, it has not. Such scenes, your habit, waste your heart and brain. It is the intoxication of religious pathos. Some men buy it at five cents per glass; some for three dollars a night at the box-office with reserved seats, entering at the dying scene; some for ten cents per copy, bound in yellow; some prefer to garner it at revival meetings, which they have attended far and near for years, departing from each as unchanged at heart as they entered.

A noble heat glows from the contemplation of duty. One must feel deeply to act grandly. Christ rocked in an awful pathos, and sweat great drops of blood, saying, "Not my will, but thine be done." His cross was the one sublime *passion* of the world. Hear Paul cry, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" defying the universe in exalted enthusiasm. But your feeling is not of that kind. Else long ago it had swept you into Christ's kingdom.

Sedate observers will confess there is no sight so sad as a young life, steeled to bitter pride by some woe, throwing itself against God, scorning

prayer, rejecting kindly consolations of the religion in which it trusted while prosperity lasted, striking a bare hand against jagged rock till the unmailed member is beaten into bloody shreds of pain. It is so hopeless. It is an effort to punish—shall we speak what the proud heart scarce whispers to itself?—the Almighty. It is so long a road on which the poor soul has entered; a resistance of twenty years? yes; twenty centuries; eternity! It suggested insanity when Xerxes was whipping the sea in the Hellespont. One thinks of the wide waste of laughing waters that stretched that day beyond the Pillars of Hercules, past the unknown Cape Horn, and along countless distant shores. Felt they the blows?

Man should arraign himself, be severe with himself, accuse and afflict himself—not Deity. Herein is the secret of that word, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God." Self-examination for correction is the lawful aim of that indignation which flashes forth under "Providential" sufferings.

Herein is the wisdom of this world's wise. If a man's affairs have gone wrong this year, as appears in these days of "taking account of stock," let him challenge himself. It is indeed so hard a duty that only minds of the finest fibre are equal to the effort. Easier by far is it to accuse one's employees, or correspondents, or "circumstances," or "Providence." Yet a stern nature issues the indictment. "If my employees, why was I blind to their incapacity? If buyers and sellers, I should have been a keener observer. If circumstances, I should have fashioned them. If Providence, what is there in me that provokes chastisement? I, I am at fault." Possibly self eventually is acquitted; but only after the most rigid trial. The great manufacturer, conscious of strength, is wont to publish his commands, demanding implicit obedience, for he professes to hold himself responsible for every thing that goes wrong in his gigantic concerns.

Such minds are magnificent timber out of which to fashion cashiers, head clerks, overseers or common-councilmen. They hedge not, with mawkish complaint and crimination of others;

but with resolute humiliation of themselves determine the correction of old abuses. They shoulder the blame. Such men make good pastors. If there be spiritual dearth in the church, they bow low before God, praying, "Search *me*, O Lord! and see if there be any wicked thing in *me*." They hold themselves accountable for every jar that disturbs the harmony of a body of which they are the head. But the deacons, nay the most inconspicuous members of the church, should adorn themselves with the same mind.

On the sea-shore in mid-summer sunshine a group of city-bred children are at their aimless play. Born to the rich, they have been waited on from their cradles until now. Nurses watch over them, picking up their sand-shovels, shoes, and hats as often as they cast them down. The old fisherman accosts a lad. "Here, boy, hold one end of my net." The youngster grasps it eagerly, the fisher talking meanwhile, telling how much he helps in the mending, explaining the uses of the net. The

chattering little bevy, at first interested spectators, fall off one by one: but our young helper still holds the net. Other boys importune him to a sail. No. He is useful! for the first time in his life. It is perfect luxury. The soggy serge drips upon his fine attire; his hands smart with the brine, the dinner-call sounds and ceases from the great hotel. But he stirs not. Of course workmen must soil their garments and hands, and fast till duty is done. Appearing in the radiant parlors at length, "Where *have* you been, my poor child?" salutes his bedraggled plight, from horrified lips. But he, proud as a prince in that first usefulness, has been "Helping! Helping the fishermen mend their nets."

They take him to the Palatine hill of the city home next day; and again in fashionable uselessness begins the old course of pampered luxury; but the boy's dreams are full for months of the one brightest day of his life, by the sea, when he was useful.

In the prosperous home-circle of many a strong church are children of the faith who would find such zest of joy, could they but be

employed. They need to be persuaded of their mission; to believe themselves of some use in the Christian cause. Their present thought is, "I can not. Ask some one else." They can not make public prayer or testimony in social meetings; can not visit the sick; can not reprove the wicked; can not exhort the erring. Amid a world full of people who "can not," how refreshing to meet a man who "can," like Paul, "do all things through Christ which strengtheneth."

Man, woman, believers, your voice can sing for us, your mind plan for us, your feet run on hallowed errands for us. You can help the fishermen mend their nets. And to you a happiness of which you have not yet dreamed would ensue.

I was returning from performing the marriage ceremony.

"You smile," said an aged woman, standing at the gate.

"I smile. It was a wedding."

Turning to pass on, shaking her iron-gray

curls she said, "Do they do well who wed to-day?"

I knew what was in her mind; for one of her daughters had wed a scoundrel and another a fool, while a third was yet left at her knee. "Do they do well who wed to-day?" Poor heart!

That night a strange fear seized me as I gave the good-night kiss to my own, almost at her fourth birthday. I held the little face long between my hands, gazing down so wistfully into the two wondering eyes that the two soft lips began to quiver and to ask, "At what are you looking, papa?"

I was looking at the vast future; what storms should brew above this head, and buffet my child, when I am gone. Who should walk on this side of her, and on this? What beliefs shall be in the air, thirty years away? Will society be stable, and the nation at peace? Will men be brave and women true, because the religion of Christ holds the world in harmonious sway? To leave her wealth? It would prove a curse in an age of anarchy.

Therefore let me consecrate my life anew, to

bless young boys and girls, to lay a little firmer and deeper, if I may, the foundations of a Christian civilization,—for her sake and for His.

They have in the rural districts, up among those well-to-do farmers, two kinds of “company.” There is the “Best-room company,” or visitors: the nice people, city people, people of station you know, and the new minister. When any of these call they are ushered into the “parlor”; a disused room on the north-west corner of the house, cold, no fire in the polished grate which is filled with leaves and grasses of the dead summer; green blinds shut so tight, and, to open them for light one must break the glue of years about the immaculate window sash. How the wind bursts in stirring the photographs poised upon the centre-table, knocking over the cross of real Palestine wood and dry as tinder, chilling us all to the bone. We sit and talk, hugging ourselves with the thought that we are parlor guests at least, though our very heart is freezing, this winter’s day.

There be those who conceive of religion as that same cold, best-room affair; and Jesus as best-room company.

But the "Home-room company," the other kind. When they know and love you well enough to let you in where they live. A room with southward gazing windows on the silver hills, with brilliant shafts of sunlight always on the floor, and the warmth of generous hearth ablaze; with the housewife's vines festooning sash and door in low December; with easy chair, and crib, and Bible in its place upon the stand, across whose open page the grandam's spectacles, as she pauses now to think; with children at their play, or sleeping to the music of the purring cat and simmering kettle burnished like a mirror; where unaffected welcome and good-will shine upon the visage of the ancient timepiece high, before whose honest pointers all deceit would cower. To be admitted there, where hearts commune with hearts!

Jesus of Nazareth is home company. If any man will, I will come unto him and sup, and he with me. I tell you, orphaned boy and homeless, the gospel is home, ten thousand times

more sweet and tender than the home you lost, sad years ago. God is our Father, Christ our Elder Brother—if you will. Come in, out of the cold. I tell you also, man of many logics and formalities, that Christ loves a warm heart better than the stateliest ovations. Let Him into the secret chamber of your life.

There are good letters, full of all gentleness, encouragement, honest thanks, and sound advice of love. Put them by themselves. There are, on the contrary, others sharp and cold: and, unless they are abusive or anonymous—that coward's kick, the kick of a sheep and not a lion's stroke—store them also, labelling them "Tonic letters." So when you become tumid, arrogant and over self-elated, do not pour camphene on flame by perusing the "good letters," but take a dose of bitter things, to cool your fever.

Who does not know what it is, when disheartened and self-contemptuous, to draw forth from that other bundle sweet words of cheer. Yellow and old, from which a photograph fell

as I turned it, one was to me this week like a voice from the grave—nay, the Better Land: for he, being dead, yet spake, telling of his confidence in me, in my ability to be of service in my times, bidding me go on. To cut the tape of that bundle, you, and read for half an hour, one after another, your friend's great hope of you,—most gentle honor,—is like opening a door from winter into instant summer; from a world of storms, where you are beggared, quite unclad, off into tropic lands of birds and amber skies and sheltered homes; till you feel—they say so many goodly things, and so many different ones say them—that it is not safe to tarry long under this heavenly equator without acclimating. One must *be* a better man, God helping.

When one has stood for nearly a year now, with his name upon a piece of paper at first no bigger than a man's hand, but seen to grow as storm-clouds grow; when he has taken nervous journeys by midnight trains, and returning said, "I don't know! Would God this suspense

were over!" When he has looked at his beautiful home with, "Heaven only knows how long I can keep it." When he has envied the security—security?—of his neighbor across the street; tossing the babes, with the shadow of the fifteenth of the month falling over their play; tearing open letters as if they were death warrants; sleeping not, eating not, speaking not to any of the load he lifts; and when he can not live much longer—*Then*, when it comes at last, a telegram, and he is safe! safe!

He shuts the office door. He sinks into the chair, and the whole man uncoils. Knotted like a whip-lash for a year, he relaxes now. Big tears gather, and press unchecked as unbidden through the closed eyelids, rolling across the hard face, upon his cold hands, upon the paper in his close grasp. He beats and throbs all over with fatigue, but is so glad to rest now. He takes back all his sad complaints against kind Providence, and finds himself praying,

"O God of my fathers, how wonderful is my life! my life." He dwells upon that word, my life.

And sleeps there, in his chair, as if kind

angels soothed him. They rouse him in the twilight, and his first thought is for that old haunting spectre, Trouble. Gone, and forever. How exhausting this delicious sense of safety and thanksgiving, a hidden ecstasy of good after ecstasies of evil. There is a sense of being favorite, maybe, with Heaven, and the thought overwhelms the soul. There is a luxury of gratitude about the altar where one poured out pleading cries; a wish to tell it from the house-top, yet a fear lest prayerless men would call it mad. There is delicious conning over, as one walks. Home? Safe. Good name? Safe. The nest of my parent's age? Safe. My son's career at schools? Safe. My plans with church and charities? Safe. Sink, sun, and leave the world to-night and sleep, for all is safe. He that keepeth us neither slumbers nor sleeps. Oh, when one thinks of countless thousands over earth who are this very instant pining for this safety, almost distracted with anxieties, if one had a thousand wires to flash them all the one assurance "Safe"! We are sure that Heaven could, if Heaven would.

Yet, after all, what is it, the security of life's

little day, its small affairs. The Saviour waits to assure you all of safety in the vast Eternity.

Did you never, in some siege of sickness, when the nerves were harp-strings which the slightest breath would ring, lie and listen to the sounds in house or street, and give them words? The winds, in tree-tops by the window, whisper, "Hush! Hush! Hu—sh," till in very impatience of being so commiserated you wish the trees would utter something else; but you can not seem to make them. A bell rings in the neighboring steeple, and your dis-tempered fancy makes it say, "Come! Come." The more you listen the more unmistakable it seems. "Come you. Come you." Can not the rest of you hear it? It fairly articulates "Come now." Oh! but I can not come. I wish it would cease. Then friends begin to whisper to each other that you are very weak to-night. That bell! Leaning over you they ask—

"You are quite tired out to-night, dear?" At times the home-sick soul of exiled saints, weary with infirmities, can hear but one sweet word

from the whole gospel, namely, "Come home." To them for the time there is no other word in all the Scriptures but this holy invitation. Religion means just this alone. "Home, Heaven, Rest." You must not think it strange; nor judge that this is really all religion teaches its profoundest votaries.

Preachers do not depict the judgment day of late as was once the habit of the pulpit? There are reasons, and among them this: that while almost every other doctrine of the gospel seems to need a defending peculiar to these times of doubt, this, with men who believe in immortality at all, stands singularly undisputed. "Thank God, He is the judge." Amid the countless heavings and subsidings of social position, the grinding wrongs with which the strong oppress the weak, the suspicions false and praises falser, temptations, falls, and hidden motives of our deeds, it is simply an escape from the crazy tyranny of Fate, "God has appointed a day—appointed it. We can wait." God will call no witness, for His eyes have seen

all. Nor will he lack power to enforce the verdict. Then each soul shall know its judgment just, and so confess it.

A shrewd, sharp practitioner sifted and sifted and sifted; and when he was done he had sifted the good man's happiness all through to the ground, under whose sod the good man slept broken-hearted. The shrewd, sharp practitioner then sifted the fragments of the estate through; and the widow and the three fair daughters, now must toil or beg; sifted the one son out to sea, taking him at his boyish fancy; and when he was done the splendid mansion was left in the sifters' sieve. When the poor boy, grown bearded and returned, struggled in the courts against false claims now ancient and established, the judge was forced to say, "We must proceed on facts, gentlemen of the jury. The plaintiff must present facts, not sentiment." Hence the sifters' sieve still contained the stolen home.

When yesterday the sifter died, old and rich, all the village folk looked on him carried forth, echoing the orphan's thoughts. "There will be no lack of facts, up there. Now a greater sieve begins its turning."

But do these kind-hearted villagers, the son defrauded and his indignant kin, do we all expect to escape the judgment, so freely confessed when it suits our own avenging? Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.

I remember when a lad, tempted often, attempting it at last, the climb to the belfry of father's church,—the first climb, though destined to be repeated at every subsequent station of the itinerant. Straining at the trap, emerging amid the attic's yellow light where here and there a sunbeam, dead, grew living in the swirling dust my feet had raised; pigeons, more stairs, the ladder, and at length the yawning lips of the great bell with shining blisters on the inner side of either cheek and on the tongue. Creeping round, amid the buffet of high winds, I read these letters under my clinging fingers,

“GLORIA IN EXCELCIS DEO.”

Why, then, every time it rings it shouts “Glory to God in the Highest!” Ever after when it rung for church it seemed to say it;

and when it tolled, according to the village custom, for the dead. When it struck for fire I could hear no other speech, though it seemed strange in such connection; and when it rocked in jubilee on Fourth of July mornings, though apter now, and aptest when stout Lee surrendered, "Glory to God in the Highest."

Doubtless it was literally true, a physical fact, that the bell wrote these words upon the air. A bell with a curved or notched edge would send out curved or notched pulsations. Any thing that rings vibrates its whole shape. From the outline of the *G*, the *l*, and every letter came the tiny wavelets, though the eye could see them not.

Thus when habit has shaped the human soul and flesh, as the tones of the bell are the result of its form, the acts of the soul are the result of its real character. What is scolding? A material or mechanical readjustment of vocal chords by long practice, set to stridulous, harsh tones, as if written in the very muscles at least; so that when volition gives the command "Open the lips and speak," the body obeys with a scold. What are habitual fretting and repin-

ing but the same? What is profanity, in those dreadful stages wherein the poor victim can not speak without it? Observe that the shape the oath takes is quite uniform. With some explosive labials are favorite; with others sibilants; with others gutturals, which the name of God, of Christ, or the "by" supply. The volition commands emphatic speech. Throat, lips, and tongue, with devilish training bent, comply with curses. Like some habitual gesture of the hand, or poise of shoulders; involuntary, but characteristic. Ask these men; they are unaware of their profanity. Ask them; it is a physical exertion to refrain, in polite society. Think of it, an impulse to curse written into the very texture of man's noblest animal function, speech. The bell said "Glory to God." Such men defame Him. If the body can get such lasting bias, what of the soul within? Wherever it be the spirit of St. Paul must ever be saying, "Glory to God in the Highest."

In a Maine ship-yard last summer, workmen cut from the butt of a mast-to-be the uneven

end left by the woodman's axe, and tossed it away. Afterwards, wanting a truck for the head of the mast, they economically saved this same fragment, and fashioned and fastened in its place. It was naught to the mast-foot, clinging to the keelson in the dark below, that its foot had become its crown, the last first, saluted by the sunbeams, stars, and earliest visions of the land; only it was strange. Many a human life has been surprised to find how strangely the wise Master Builder, in His new creation of the soul, takes unseemly moments, years of sorrow maybe, fragments of suffering seasons which we would have cast into willing forgetfulness, and crowns us with them. Had it not been for those griefs and humiliations, we might not have been saved.

WHAT IS KINDLING WOOD?

I have often come to the hour of work, — to the study, to the desk, to the pen, — and could not, for the life of me, make a start. Yet the Sabbath has already started and is well on its way. I must be ready with my message. Indeed, I protest that I have messages in my soul. It is not a dreaded task to meet the people, but a supreme joy, — if I could only think, just now, the thoughts that I had yesterday, last evening, this morning, in fact, when I first awoke. I have logs enough in my wood-yard : crude ideas of inspiring themes. But how to get a-going.

Just then some one, down in the parlors, has touched the piano.

Oh, my little daughter, thank you ! thank you ! You do not know the service you have done me, away off here, three rooms from you and out of your sight. I fall a-dreaming, I kindle, I hear the singing legions around the throne. I am all awake now. Quick, my pen !

I am not about to write on the New Song. My topic is, doubtless, quite foreign to anything suggested by these sweet sounds, faint, soft, and yet, somehow, inspiring. But the notes of the piano have, a thousand times, been kindling wood to me.

I can never hear music at Coney Island, or on the veranda at Saratoga, but I begin to think sermons. It inspires me. I lapse into silence and begin to think out addresses. I forget the music, till it stops, when I awake to a realization of my debt to fiddles and horns. And to me it makes no difference what music is rendered, — opera, waltz, symphony, all are equally sacred and inspiring to me. I have no associations of the academy or ball-room to chain down and secularize the glorious strains.

You may kindle yourself with a friend's suggestive conversation. Begin to debate with him upon the theme you wish to discuss. How soon you flash with thoughts. Thank you, my friend; I have used you for kindling wood. And you, reader, may so use me. I should esteem it an honor to be put to such humble service beneath your noble fuel.

Were I to provoke you, I should yet do you service. When you exclaim, "I could have put it better myself!" surely I have kindled you.

IN SECRET.

(MATTHEW VI. 1-6, 16-18.)

Secret alms, secret fasting, secret prayer, — precepts of the Lord, and containing the secret of character-building. All growth is secret. What boy, country bred, but has gone out into his garden patch, on nourishing June days, bent on actually seeing the flowers grow?

I have tied a string round a favorite vine and watched the vine lengthening. I have lain in the corn-fields and heard the crackling of growing stalks. But the actual process always eludes observation. It is from within outward; it is from the sunlight down and in, then outward; but always hidden. Growing is night work. You look out in the morning and exclaim, "Oh, the apple-trees are all in clouds of bloom!" I almost dislike the pond lily because it is a floral traitor and ostentatiously opens its petals even while you are looking on. I take it

the analogy holds with human character. It is not right to be "always doing something." One should often be doing nothing, but thinking something, dreaming something, hoping and believing something, and remembering many things. It is the soul's growing time.

He is to be warned who can never content himself without a book in his hand. What? You are five-and-thirty years of age and a reader all your life till now, yet cannot think and dream profitably over your own mental pictures and conceits? You are continually wanting the day's journal for the news? Man, have you no "news" in your own mind? No doubt you have, if you will but lie still in a hammock for an hour, under passing clouds and whispering leaves, in secret, with no voice speaking to you but your own soul's and God's. What a misery it is, when we preachers are so busy about other people's souls that we know not our own souls! when we never read a book but the thought is, "How will that preach?" I do not say that you Sunday-school teachers "work" too hard; nor that you evangelists are thinking too much about other people's repent-

ances, believing for other people, going through the process of conversion for other people, meeting doubts and feeding on Scripture for other people in generous Christian work ; but I do suggest that you have too little of the secrecy with self that is necessary for your own soul's growth.

PUBLIC MEN.

It is a misfortune to be the child of a President of the Republic during the growing period of childhood. Public men know what it is to tremble for their growing little ones who are handled by so many people. They are like geraniums in a hall-way, where every passer-by pinches the leaves to steal a little fragrance, till all the perfume is entirely dissipated. " Kiss me, little one," says every one who comes to the house. Ah, those sacred childhood kisses given to anybody and everybody ! Then the child grows bold all too early, and mayhap brazen. What a misfortune to be a prodigy, and at twelve years of age to have faced great audiences with a fiddle or at the piano, till the secretive childhood processes have been ruined.

He is a little old man. She has no trembling, curling lip and pretty bashful ways, nor blushing power, indeed. Hence there is no real character-growth. It is seeming rather than being that has been cultivated. And I have quite the same fear for young converts. For my part, I'll not push them too fast into the publicity of "witnessing" and exhortation and "work." Let them have some sweet, quiet child-life in the church. There should be a Christian childhood, protected and indulged, as there is a Christian manhood. Rather cultivate the love for Christ and fellow-man which will itself compel them to witnessing and working.

COMPLAINING IN SECRET.

Complain to God, not of God. Otherwise, for the most part, keep complaints secret. Why should a strong man return from his day's battle and pour out his complaint of men and things into the ears of his wife? Poor heart, she understands perfectly that he asserts despair to provoke her to assert hope; that he complains of evils that she may argue against him with

good. And, though her own load has been as heavy as his all day long, yet she addresses herself, heroic, to the task of crushing his complaints with reasons for thanksgiving. If he is the weaker vessel, it may be all right. And yet why does not the man go in secret, like Job, like David, like Mary when she intercepted the Lord on his way to Lazârus' tomb, and complain to Him? Then come forth rewarded openly with good cheer.

I will welcome any weaker man's attempt to lean on me. But when a man in as good health as I am, with as much natural intelligence as I, with no more burdens in life than I, acquainted with the same Lord as I am, comes whining and knock-kneed to complain in my ears, I feel like saying, "My brother, my heart is about as full as it can hold. Go you and complain to your God. Tell Him all about this coldness in Zion, and how, as you think, things are fast going to the bad in the kingdom. Take your long face into the secret place of prayer. Then come forth and help the rest of us. For the burden is so heavy that we cannot stand much complaining from strong fellows like you."

EVERY LIFE ITS SECRET.

Every man's life is a patent, and one that never runs out; neither can another infringe it. You can do what I cannot do. If I do not perform my duty it will never be done, for no one else can do it. There comes an hour to every thoughtful man when he longs to know this secret of his life. What does my God mean to do with me? Why these sharp vicissitudes and contrasts of condition? A lump of silver, now mined, now smelted, now assayed, now coined, might ask, "What does it all mean?" So a human soul may really ask of God. For "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him."

And what if the heavens do not answer? Why, then, there is a secret between me and my God, safe in His heart, as there was between Christ and the Father, when the Son wept in Gethsemane. I watched a great man at a reception. Hundreds of other great men came and went. The throng was vast, and made up from the world's end. But I saw at his side a little girl, maybe his daughter; she held,

closely, his disengaged hand, and fondled it. She took liberties with him in charming familiarity. She seemed to me to say, "All you great folk and strangers, take him while you can get him, and as much of him as you can. But I have him all the time. There are secrets between him and me!" And I doubt not there were; for he often bent low down to whisper in her shell of an ear, at which she laughed in glee.

Oh, ye stars of the night, He is your God. Ye great hills, that claim Him as yours! Ye deep, vast seas; ye nations on nations,—yours. Yes, but He is *my* God. He comes into my home, into my chamber, into my small heart. There are secrets between us, my God and me, and the universe knows them not, nor ever will know!

SECRET BLESSINGS.

Everybody wonders how A B has made such a success of life.

C D "knew him when he was a freckled-face New Hampshire lad, with wart-crustured hands."

E F “knew him in college, when he lead the wrong end of his class.”

I J “thinks it is all luck and chance that he has got on so well.”

O P “cannot explain it at all. The man seems to have developed heart and brains; is received by the best people; is weighty in the community, and yet — why, he has no great abilities.”

Ah, but if A B were to tell them, all the alphabet of them would not understand it. The secret praying over shop and factory, the secret confessions of sins, the secret alms. The chamber with the locked door is the workshop of this man's fortunes; the Bible the anvil; the uplifted hands the hammers; the secret smile of God the flame. Happy is A B if he forgets not that workshop, for he is not through with life yet.

Go apart in secret with Jesus, and when you come forth, men shall wonder at the courage with which you meet the ills of life; shall be astonished by your strength and cheer, for He shall reward you openly.

WILLING TO DIE WITH JESUS.

(JOHN xi. 16.)

“Let us also go, that we may die with Him!” exclaimed doubting Thomas. What disciple ever said a nobler thing? It ought to win all our hearts for poor Thomas. It was real courage; for “that fox” Herod was on the watch to extirpate this whole brood. And, while Christ knew, doubtless, what He himself would do, having the power over death, yet these mortal men only knew that they literally took their lives in their hands if they followed Him back to Jerusalem. Ah, these dying men, trying to keep step with the Deathless One! These mortals “going with” the Immortal. It was like chickens of the yard, hatched in an eagle’s nest, attempting to spread their mean wings, and dare the regions of upper air with the upstarting eagle. Real courage, Thomas.

PERSONAL ATTACHMENT.

And it was personal attachment to Jesus. Thomas was never very “sound,” very clear in the doctrines. The crucifixion overwhelmed

him. Yet he was not Judas. You dare not read Thomas out of church. No doubt he is this moment before the Great White Throne. This then is the cry of despairing friendship. He loved the Master, even to the death. Therefore I love Thomas.

The soldiers of Napoleon, poor fellows, knew little of what was best for France, best for Europe, or best for themselves ; they only knew their adored captain.

Men can be found to trust blindly to a fellow-man ; they pour their property into a common "pool," not questioning. They are content if they "know the man."

A bride asks few questions ; she simply loves the man. If he says, "It is best to go to the Pacific coast," she goes. Her object is not the Pacific coast, but to be with him, where-soever.

There was something in Jesus that attracted men. Jesus made friends among the common people. It was not a discriminating, doctrinal love so much as it was an attachment to this benignant Person. Think of Zaccheus "taking a fancy to Him," as we should say. And the

gay, good livers, men of the world, wine bibbers, fellows of overflowing animal spirits and the victims of their own generosity; the very men whom the churches in our day repel, they invited Him to dine with them! It is a mistake to suppose that Jesus walked the earth unloved. For three years He never earned a coat for His back, a shoe, a loaf. Yet these frugal men, these poverty-pinched Galileans freely gave Him everything. Though it was true that He "had not where to lay His head," yet I doubt not He might have had bed and shelter every night of those two first years of His ministry. When He staggered through the streets of the city toward His cross, the women held up their babes to look on Him passing. "The good Jesus!" "Oh, thou holy Nazarine!" "See, my sisters, the kind Galilean goes to his death!" And with many other tender cries of pity saluted they Him, so that He marched through a lane of beautiful tear-eyed Hebrew women, all compassion. And when it was all over, a rich stranger loaned a tomb.

NO RELIGION WITHOUT A PERSONAL
CENTRE.

Jesus Christ is Christianity. He said so. "I am the truth." There never was any other than a personal religion. Islamism is Mahomet. Buddhism is Sakya Muni. Doubt is Herbert Spencer. Why, civic truth is nothing without a leader. Washington was the Revolution, absolutely, in more than one dark day. There were days on days when all there was left of the war for the Union was simply "honest Abe Lincoln."

By argument you fix a man's action as you want it. The next day you are astonished to find that he has acted the very contrary. Why? "I had a friend; I fell in with my friend's views." A man takes a certain course "to please his wife." Very well; I cannot respect him the less if she is a sensible woman. A youth acts thus and thus "to please his mother." Good; stand on that reason; there is only one better reason in the universe. And that is, *to please God*. It must be the love for

Christ that fixes action, because Jesus Christ wishes or forbids. It is not given unto men to be good by impersonal precept. I do not see how a man can bring himself to die for a "creed," a doxy, a church, or a denomination. But might he not for a Person?

IMAGINATION PERMITTED.

If Jesus were here, you say. If his foot left a mark in the dust by the roadside in front of my house, I would go put my shoe-mark beside it. If he only opened our doors and came in to sit in our chairs! Use your imagination; it is a sacred faculty. Reproduce the historic personage, on the basis of recorded facts, by imagination. I may not trust my imaginations of Calcutta, for I never visited it, nor have I read much about it. But I may reproduce the home of my boyhood, mountain and river, gable and chamber window, maple-tree marked with the rope of my swing, and old well-sweep loaded with flat-irons and stones. By memory and imagination the whole scene is before me.

There is a Christ in the Scriptures. Accept

those facts, and picture Him "with you always." Why not? The widow of the mechanic killed last week sits alone. The children are in bed; but the bed must go. The roof keeps out the present rain; but the roof is not theirs. The crumbs of the last loaf lie on the pine table at her side. How to live! All alone! Then her head sinks down on her weary arms fallen across the table, and she is ready to perish. Suddenly over her there seems to her an outspread wing. Though the candle is burned out, the room seems light. Though no one is within the reach of her arm, as she lifts it and circles it about, yet it seems to her that she has clasped the neck of a helper, and she falls asleep at her prayers. Imagination? No, reality. Christ is there. I pity him who has never felt the very hem of Jesus' robe in his hand. When Christ is such a reality as that to us, we can go die with Him as devotedly as Thomas.

THE HONOR OF DYING WITH CHRIST.

I stumbled across a procession in Broadway this week. I struck it midway; it stretched below me and above me for blocks. I could

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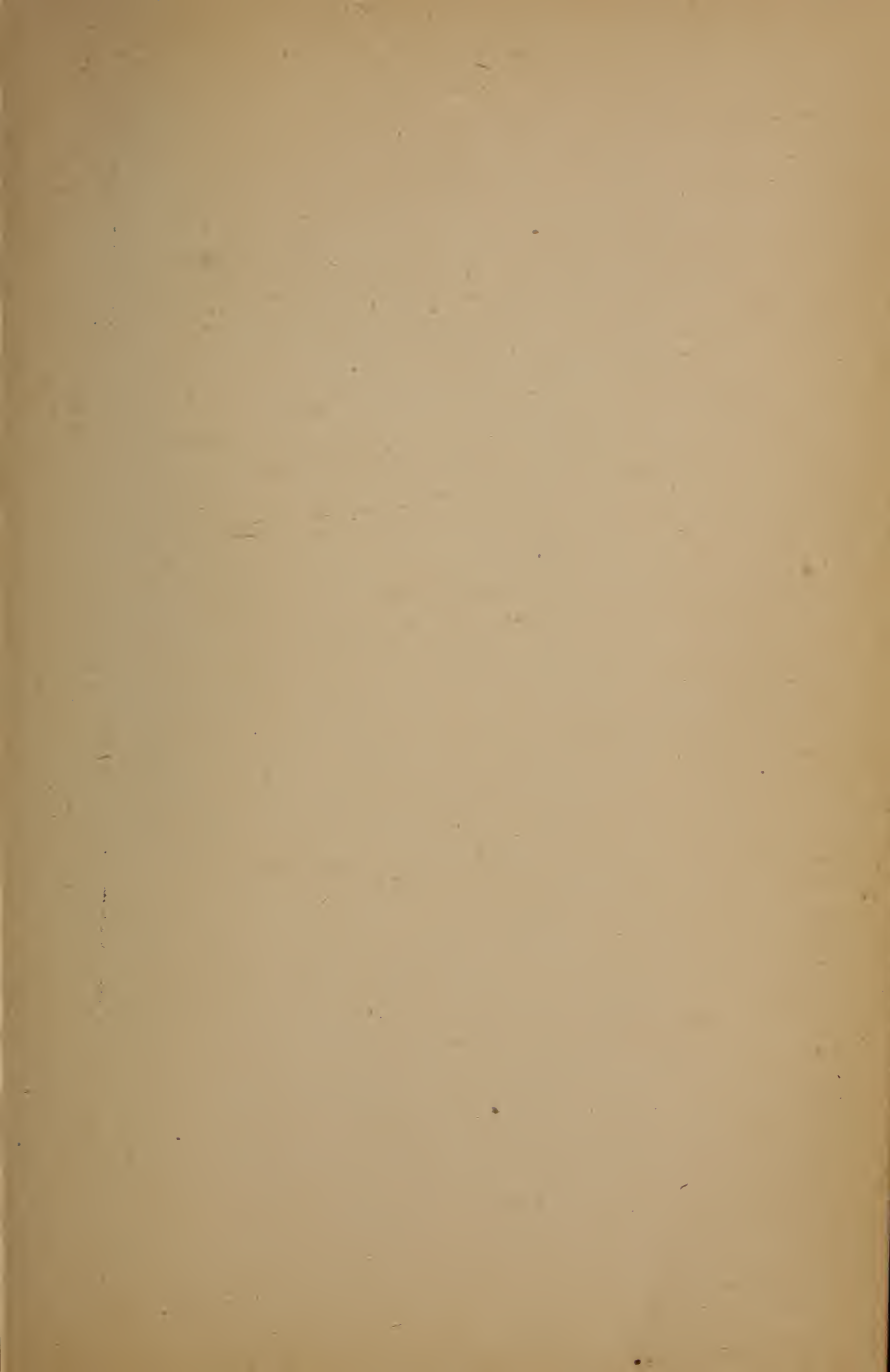
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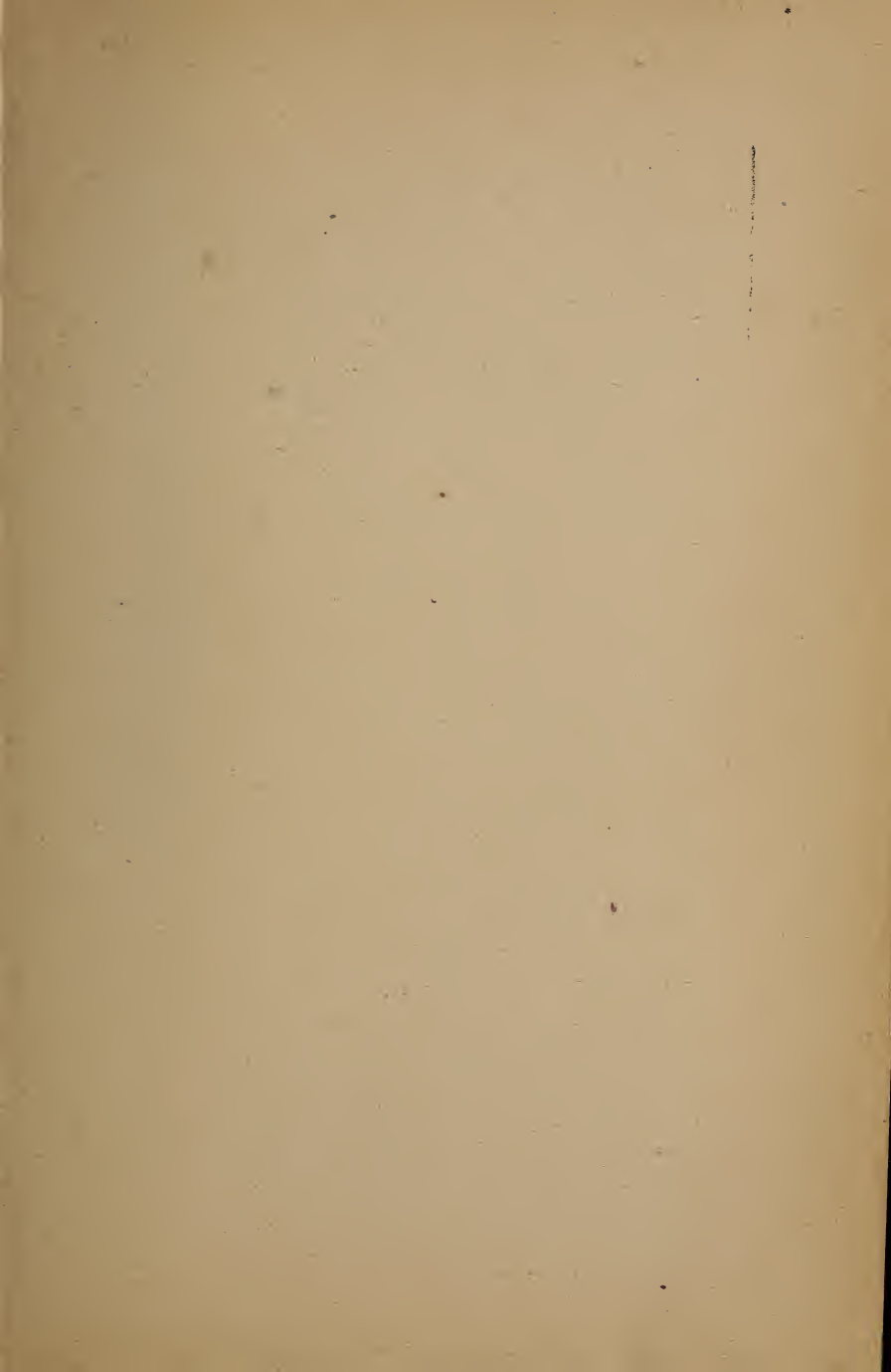
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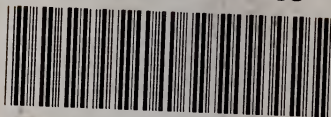
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